THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN MOSLEM ASIA

E. AL[illegible]NDER POWELL

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BY

E. ALEXANDER POWELL

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TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

HUSSEIN ALAI KHAN

PERSIAN MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES

WHO IS A LIVING REFUTATION

OF KIPLING'S ASSERTION THAT

"EAST IS EAST, AND WEST IS WEST

AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET"

FOREWORD

Let me admit, at the very outset, that my purpose in writing this book, is to expose and attack the selfish, insincere, and dangerous policies which are being pursued by certain European Governments in the Near East and the intrigue, corruption, deceit, and bad faith which have characterized those policies. Perhaps, in expressing my opinions, I have been unnecessarily candid. But, in order to achieve my purpose of tearing aside the veil of falsehood and exaggeration which has so long obscured the true facts of the Near Eastern situation, candour has been necessary. Far too long has the public been deceived by the euphemisms of the diplomatists, the excuses of the apologists, and the fabrications of the propagandists. Because those whose policies I have denounced and whose statements I have challenged may attempt to dispose of my charges by asserting that I do not know whereof I speak, I will be pardoned, I trust, for emphasizing the fact that my acquaintance with the countries of the Near and Middle East, their peoples and problems, is not an ephemeral one but extends over nearly a quarter of a century.

I have lived—which is quite a different thing from

merely travelling—in Greece, Constantinople, Anatolia, Syria, Egypt. During Abdul-Hamid's reign, "when Turkey was still Turkey," I came to know the peasantry of Thrace and Anatolia through sailing, shooting, and fishing along those coasts with that picturesque American sailor of fortune, Bucknam Pasha, our invariable companion on these excursions being a young Turkish naval officer, Raouf Bey, who was destined, in the fulness of time, to hold the second highest office in the gift of his people. And I learned about Turkey from him. I was in Macedonia during the period when the *comitadji* bands, Greek, Serb, and Bulgar, were taking turns at harrying that distracted region. I was in Bosnia and Herzegovina when those Turkish provinces were annexed by Austria. During the opening years of the present century I served for a time as an American consular officer in Syria and later in Egypt. An eye-witness of the Turkish Revolution which overthrew Abdul-Hamid, I was personally acquainted with many of the leaders of the Young Turk movement. And I learned about Turkey from them. As the guest of Meissner Pasha, the famous German engineer, I was the first American to travel on the Hedjaz Railway, that remarkable politico-religious undertaking which was designed to link Turkey with the Holy Places in Arabia. And I was, I believe, the last unofficial foreigner to be received in audience by Mohammed VI, the last of the sultans, before his deposition. During the past two decades my wanderings have taken me over virtually the whole of that vast region, stretching from the banks of the

Bosphorus to the southern rim of Arabia, from the Mediterranean to the back of China, which constitutes Moslem Asia. Anatolia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine, Transjordania, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Kurdistan, Turkestan, Persia—I have visited them all, some of them many times. And it has been my privilege to discuss the politics and problems of the Near East with many, if not most, of the men whose names have bulked largest in its history during the past quarter-century. With such a background, I am justified, it would seem, in laying claim to a tolerably wide knowledge of my subject.

For the assistance they have given me in the preparation of this book I am under obligations to many persons, particularly to Mufty-Zade Zia Bey, probably the best informed Turk in this country, and to his Excellency Hussein Alai Khan, Persian minister to the United States. These gentlemen have read the chapters dealing with their respective countries and have placed at my disposal their wide knowledge regarding events and conditions. Let me emphasize the fact, however, that the opinions expressed are my own, neither of the gentlemen in question having made the slightest attempt to alter my impressions or change my judgments.

To Dr. Talcott Williams' "Turkey, a World Problem of To-day," I am indebted for much valuable historical and ethnographic data regarding Turkey and Armenia, as I am to the articles on Armenia in the Encyclopædia Britannica by W. J. Childs, Esq., late of British Naval Intelligence, and Major-General Sir

Charles William Wilson. From the vivid and remarkably accurate articles by Clair Price, Esq., and Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, which have appeared in "Current History" and other magazines, I have drawn liberally in writing my account of the Nationalist movement in Turkey, these two gentlemen being, in my opinion, by far the most impartial and best informed of present-day writers on Near Eastern questions. In sketching the earlier phases of the Zionist movement in Palestine I have depended on the account given in "The New Map of Asia" by Herbert Adams Gibbons, Esq., and I am under like obligations to W. D. Hegarth, Esq., author of "The Penetration of Arabia," a remarkable compendium of information relative to the physical characteristics of that mysterious land. In order that I may not be charged with bias and with being anti-British, I have drawn my accounts of certain significant political events in Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Persia, wholly from British sources, mainly from "Some Truths about Palestine" and "The Mesopotamian Mystery," articles in the London "Times" and the Hon. J. M. Balfour's "Recent Happenings in Persia." In fact, my criticisms of British policy in the Near and Middle East are mild when compared with those of many Englishmen.

For the opportunities they have afforded me, the kindnesses they have shown me, and the information they have given me I am also indebted to H.I.M. the Shah of Persia, to H.M. the King of 'Iraq, to General Gonraud, formerly high commissioner and commander-in-chief in Syria, to Sir Wyndham Deedes, acting high

commissioner in Palestine, to Sir Percy Z. Cox, high commissioner in 'Iraq, and to British, French, Turkish, and Persian officials, to Arab sheikhs, and to American consuls and missionaries too numerous to mention by name.

E. Alexander Powell

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CHAPTER I

BEHIND THE VEIL OF PROPAGANDA

SOME years ago I attended a play which was chiefly remarkable for the fact that an actress of undeniable talent but somewhat advanced years essayed to take the part of a girl still in her teens. In order to create an illusion of youthful freshness and innocence the producers had adopted the novel expedient of stretching between the audience and the stage an all but invisible rose-tinted screen which, when supplemented by an ingenious lighting arrangement, softened, if it did not wholly obliterate, the tell-tale marks of time. So successful was the effect thus produced that the less sophisticated little dreamed that they were watching autumn masquerading in the garments of spring.

During the five years that have elapsed since the signing at Mudania of the armistice which brought Turkey's participation in the Great War to an end, I have watched with growing concern the employment of a somewhat similar device by certain European nations, which, by

means of a veil cunningly woven from untruths, half-truths, and exaggerations, have sought to blind the eyes of a gullible public to the selfishness and cynicism of their designs and the sinister nature of their ambitions in those regions which are collectively referred to as the Near East. In their attempt to mislead the world as to their true intentions and the actual conditions, these nations have been actively aided by certain American agencies, political, journalistic, and religious, a credulous audience being found in that large section of the American people which believes that "if you see it in the paper, it 's so."

It is with the intention of rending this veil of falsehood and hypocrisy, so that my country-people may be brought to a realization of what has been taking place behind it, that I have undertaken this book. It is to the great mass of reasoning and fair-minded people both in this country and abroad, who, I am convinced, wish to learn the unvarnished truth, no matter how completely it may upset their opinions, that I address myself. In order that they may have the clearest possible understanding of a situation which vitally affects the peace of the world, and which, if permitted to continue, will inevitably result in another world conflict, I propose, in the following pages, to discard all subterfuges and euphemisms and, when the narrative requires it, to substitute "petroleum" for "self-determination," "political ambitions" for "national obligations," "imperialism" for "altruism."

That the task is, by its nature, bound to be a thankless one, I realize at the outset. It goes without saying that

my statements will be challenged, my accusations denied or minimized, by those whose sincerity I impugn. That I shall be charged with being anti-British, pro-Turk, an apologist, a propagandist, a special pleader, is, of course, to be expected, for governments, newspapers, and religious organizations, like individuals, deeply resent criticism, and, unlike individuals, they possess the power to make their resentment felt.

Let me see if I can define my position. If to charge me with being "anti-British," for example, is to imply that I am antagonistic toward the British people or British institutions, then nothing could be further from the truth, for I am outspoken in my liking for the one and my admiration for the other. I believe that British colonial rule is in most respects the equal, and in many respects the superior, of any in the world, and that, generally speaking, it assures justice, decent government, and prosperity to the ruled. Hence I have not the slightest objection to seeing it established in any region whose inhabitants desire it. What I do object to, however, is the methods employed by those who control British policy in attempting to impose British rule—call it mandate, protectorate, sphere of influence, what you will—on peoples who do not want it. I object to the misrepresentations made by so eminent a statesman as the British foreign minister, Lord Curzon, who has proclaimed again and again that Britain's insistence on remaining in Mesopotamia is in no way actuated by a desire to retain control of its oil-fields but solely by the unselfish desire to keep her pledge to the natives of that country. For every one who is really conversant

with the situation in 'Iraq knows that both Arabs and Kurds bitterly resent their subjection to a British mandate, which was imposed upon them by methods that the Tammany politicians of Tweed's day would have hesitated to employ—methods which included the cynical breaking of solemn pledges, the kidnapping of an influential cabinet minister who had unwisely voiced his disapproval of British policy, and an arbitrary refusal to permit a genuine expression of public opinion —and that they have expressed their resentment by at least one bloody rebellion. Had Lord Curzon omitted his pious protestations about honour and altruism, which only brought a smile of cynical amusement to the lips of the informed, and had frankly avowed that Britain purposed to stay in 'Iraq because she coveted its oil and because the Eastern policy she is pursuing requires her to maintain political control of the country, I should have been the first to applaud his courage and sincerity even though I did not approve of his aims.

If to charge me with being "pro-Turkish" is to imply that I condone the massacres and other damnable crimes of which the old Turkish Government was guilty, or that I am an apologist for the injustice, inefficiency, and corruption which were so long the curse of Turkish rule, then the charge is without a shadow of foundation, for I have never hesitated to express my unmeasured condemnation of Turkish cruelty and oppression. But, admitting that the Turks have been guilty of many misdeeds in the past, is that any reason why those European nations whose imperialistic ambitions are threatened by the renaissance of Turkey should sup-

press, or distort, or deny virtually every scrap of authentic news favourable to the Turks? Because in the days of the empire Turkey was abominably misgoverned, it by no means follows that Turkey under a democratic form of government will fare no better. Because an American who was once our ambassador at Constantinople, where his facilities for first-hand investigation were limited by the diplomatic restrictions which hedge all ambassadors, an Englishman who was once secretary to Lloyd George and is now an apologist for the policies of his discredited chief, a bishop whose church has expended millions in supporting missionaries in Armenia, all assert that the Turk is a confirmed murderer and tyrant incapable of reformation, who can never take his place in civilized society, that does not make their assertions true, "For while the light holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return."

What I would like to see the American people do is to live up to their world-wide reputation for the square deal and fair play by examining *both* sides of the question before formulating their opinions. And that they have not been permitted to do. Consciously or unconsciously, both press and pulpit have systematically concealed the facts whenever the publication of the facts might tend to cast discredit on Christian nations or redound to the credit of the Turks. These are harsh words, yet how else can I characterize the policy pursued by the American press in giving the widest publicity to the massacres committed by the Turkish Moslems in Armenia, while at the same time ignoring or extenuating the massacres committed by the Greek Christians in

Anatolia or of the repeated assertions in the editorial columns of our newspapers and from the pulpits of our churches that the exchange of populations was another example of Turkish barbarity when, as a matter of fact, the plan originated with the League of Nations?

An instance of the curious stubbornness with which certain editors cling to their policies, once they have adopted them, even when there is a wealth of evidence available to prove that they have been misinformed, is provided by a letter which I received not long ago from the editors of one of the most influential and widely quoted magazines in the United States, who wrote that "though we sympathize with much of what you have to say about the Turk, we have taken a stand politically against him, doubtless under the sway of the old Gladstonian tradition." And the same one-track attitude of mind was exemplified in the remark made to me recently by one of the most respected clergymen in New England. "I don't want to hear the truth about the Turks," he declared. "I have long since formed my opinion of them."

When the man in the street refuses to examine both sides of a question, no one but himself is harmed, but when editors, clergymen, and others whose function it is to mould public opinion ignore those rules of evidence which affect the judgment of most people in matters of ordinary controversy they fail signally in their duty, for, instead of aiding the public to pierce the veil of propaganda, they indirectly help the propagandists to keep that veil before the public's eyes. I realize, of course, that, try as they may, newspapers cannot always

escape the taint of foreign propaganda in news received from abroad, just as I realize that most of the speakers and writers on Near Eastern problems are inspired by sincere conviction. But the fact remains that most of these interpreters, usually from ignorance, frequently from prejudice, occasionally from selfish interest, are partisan, that they see the facts not as they are but as they wish to see them.

I am glad to say that the American newspaper correspondents in Europe have rarely lent themselves, wittingly at least, to this conspiracy—for that is what it amounts to—for keeping the American people in ignorance of the facts of the Near Eastern situation. In the systematic hoodwinking of the public they have had no part. It would be strange, indeed, if the opinions of some of them had not been affected to some extent by skilfully inculcated prejudice, by sympathy, or by the subtle flattery of honorific distinctions, but it speaks well for the honour of newspaper correspondents as a class that the vast majority of them have worked unceasingly to learn the truth and have not hesitated to tell it. It is the editors at home, not the correspondents abroad, who, by printing editorials which are biased or are based on misapprehensions, or by giving a subtle slant to the news of the day, or by other methods regarded as legitimate in journalism, are mainly responsible for warping public opinion. It is only fair to add, however, that there are many newspapers whose policy in this respect has been above criticism.

Propaganda, in the political sense of the term, was

created by ourselves as a war measure, as a legitimate weapon in our struggle with the Central powers, and when that struggle ended we were glad to lay the weapon aside. But not so the European nations. Having witnessed its effectiveness in war, they proceeded to utilize it in peace, not merely as a means of defeating their rivals but to deceive those who, like ourselves, are watching the game from the side-lines. It is with distinct apprehension that I have watched, during these past five years, the steady undermining by European propagandists of our once rugged public opinion. The results of their efforts are everywhere apparent, in our newspapers, our magazines, our books, our schools, our churches, our legislative bodies. The widely advertised Institute of Politics at Williamstown, founded as a forum for the frank discussion of international questions, has become, in effect, a Congress of Propagandists, a gathering before which the official explainers of foreign governments, the apologists for discredited administrations, the self-appointed pleaders for various policies, may air their views with the assurance that they will receive the wide publicity which they are after.

My purpose in writing this book, however, is not to reveal the extent of foreign propaganda in this country, and its effects on American opinion, but to show what that propaganda attempts to hide. I feel that Americans should be afforded an opportunity to see the Near Eastern situation as it is, and not as one interested faction of another wishes them to see it. In the succeeding chapters, therefore, I propose to employ what might be described as a "shirt-sleeve style" which

means that I shall discard all euphemisms and tell, in candid terms, as much as possible of "nothing but the truth."

In using the word "struggle" in my title, I do not mean to suggest that there is any conflict in progress between the East and the West, between Christianity and Islam. The "Moslem menace," of which so much has been said, though not dead is dormant and likely to remain so; all that the Moslem peoples ask is to be freed of foreign interference, to be left alone to work out their own salvation. The struggle to which I refer is the subterranean conflict which is being waged between certain of the great powers—to be explicit, between France and Great Britain—for political and commercial ascendancy in Western Asia. The story of that conflict forms a narrative of intrigue, trickery, selfishness, deceit, greed and hypocrisy, which has few parallels in history. Small wonder that those concerned, eager for America's good opinion and desperately in need of American support, do not want Americans to learn the truth about it.

At the close of 1918 it seemed that the lessons taught by the Great War were so appalling that even the case-hardened diplomatists would give heed to them. Yet, before the soil has had time to settle on five million graves, the world once more finds itself caught up in the same mad merry-go-round of imperialism, intrigue, secret diplomacy, and all that follows in their train. Nothing is really changed. The old, bad methods which brought such disaster to the world have not been abandoned. The sleek diplomatists of Downing Street and

the Quai d'Orsay and the Consulta are pursuing the same policies which obtained in the days of Talleyrand and Metternich, of Disraeli and Bismarck. They still cling tenaciously to the theory that it is the God-given right of the white man to impose his will on the black, the yellow, and the brown; to achieve their ends they trade whole populations, heedless of their rights and desires, as callously as though they were so many herds of cattle; they are prepared; if need be, to send whole armies down to slaughter. They believe, in their cynical souls, that "might makes right," that "the vanquished must pay," that "God is on the side of the heaviest battalions." Theirs is

> the good old rule, the simple plan,
> That he shall take who has the power
> And he shall keep who can.

CHAPTER II

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT THE TURKS

We have witnessed one of the most astonishing and dramatic episodes in the history of the world. In that brief period—less than half a decade—which began with the signing of the Mudania Armistice on October 31, 1918, and ended on July 24, 1923, with the signing of the Peace of Lausanne, we have seen a New Turkey rise like a modern Phœnix from the ruins of the decrepit, detested, and defeated Ottoman Empire. We have seen this young nation, in government more democratic than any existing democracy, successfully defy the victorious Allies, who confidently believed that they had weakened her until she was helpless; tear up the treaty which they sought to impose upon her; annihilate the Greek army which was sent against her; force Great Britain, France, Italy, and Greece to write "Finis" to their schemes for territorial aggrandizement in Asia Minor; bring about the overthrow of two European cabinets and the deposition of a European king; outgeneral the ablest diplomatists of Europe at the council-table; achieve a degree of military power which is relatively greater than any that Turkey has known in two and a half centuries; divorce state and church, and at the

same time regain the undisputed leadership of the world of Islam. We have seen the deposition of the last of that long line of sultans who misruled in Turkey for upward of six hundred years. We have seen the Turkish capital transferred from the Bosphorus, where it had been since the fall of Byzantium, to an obscure town of Inner Asia. We have seen the supposedly beaten and demoralized Turks, who, it was confidently asserted, were to be kicked out of Europe for good and all, turn the tables by kicking the Europeans out of Turkey, and, not content with that, push their European frontiers farther to the northward than they were at the outbreak of the Great War. We have seen the complete reversal of every prophecy made in regard to Turkey. It is the story of this bewildering, almost incredible, volte-face of fortune, this astounding come-back of a nation—few parallels for which are chronicled in history—and the narrative of the ambitions, suspicions, jealousies, and intrigues which made it possible, that I purpose to relate in all their baldness in the following pages.

The fact is that the American people have been misinformed and blinded by a propaganda against the Turk, a manipulation of press and pulpit, which has seldom been equalled in audacity of untruth and dexterity of misrepresentation. So subtle, insidious, and systematic has this propaganda been, so shrewdly have the propagandists utilized our racial and religious prejudices, that we have come to accept it at its face-value, convinced that the Turk is all that his enemies have painted him. Knowing nothing of Turkish char-

acter save by hearsay—for there are virtually no Turks in the United States to speak for themselves—our attitude, when the word "Turk" is mentioned, has become characterized by a hostility, intolerance, and suspicion reminiscent of the Whitechapel ruffian who called to his companion: "'Ere comes a stranger, 'Arry. 'Eave arf a brick at 'im!"

It seems to me, therefore, that the time has come for Americans to hear the truth about Turkey and the Turks. It is time that they should be awakened to the true significance of the events that have been taking place in the mysterious interior of that great peninsula which separates the Black Sea from the Mediterranean. It is time that they should view the Turkish situation through glasses uncoloured by ignorance, prejudice, or misconception. And it is high time that they should examine, understand, and appraise the policies of the Allied statesmen who, ever since the close of the Great War, have been tinkering ineffectually with the Near Eastern Question, thereby imperilling the peace of the world.

In writing these chapters on the Turk I do not address myself to those who, swayed by the old Gladstonian tradition, believe that it is the mission of the Christian powers to drive the Unspeakable, as they like to call him, not merely out of Europe, but out of the universe. I am not attempting to reason with those who are so steeped in prejudice that they refuse to give the Turk a hearing, for they are as implacable as the American frontiersmen who maintained that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. My appeal is, rather, to the great

mass of reasoning and fair-minded people who, I am convinced, wish to learn the unvarnished truth about the Turkish situation, no matter how unpalatable it may be or how much it may necessitate a readjustment of their opinions.

But, before I proceed, let me make it amply clear that I hold no brief for the Turk. I am no partisan of his. Nor, as it will probably be charged by some, am I anti-Greek, or anti-Armenian or anti-British. I am writing these chapters not in apology for or in extenuation of the Turk, but because heretofore he has stood at the bar of public opinion inarticulate and unprovided with counsel, and that is not in accordance with the American idea of what constitutes justice. A man may be a criminal, but in civilized communities it is customary to hear his side of the case before condemning him.

In attempting to explain the Turk I find myself in the position of an eminent lawyer, a friend of mine. We were discussing the Eighteenth Amendment and its consequences.

"Though I never touch liquor myself," he remarked, "I don't approve of the prohibition laws. I believe that they are fundamentally wrong. Yet I can't afford to say so publicly, any more than thousands of other reputable and conscientious men who are equally opposed to them can afford to, because I would find myself in opposition to a righteous, well organized, and very influential element in the community which would seize the opportunity to make it appear that, in opposing prohibition, I was championing wrong."

The same thing holds true of any attempt candidly

to discuss the Turkish question, on which, indeed, I almost despair of making my position clear. I am perfectly aware that a very powerful and eminently respectable section of the American public—largely composed of the religious element—is bitterly hostile to the Turk and that these good people would gladly see him eliminated from the family of nations, were that possible. I am likewise aware that, in attempting to explain to them, my motives will be misinterpreted and I shall be charged with defending his massacres and his misrule. But though I yield to no one in denouncing the appalling cruelty and oppression which for so long blackened Turkish rule, it is merely shallow to say that the Turks massacred the Armenians, that they have always misgoverned subject races, that they are no good and never will be, and leave it there. So, even at the risk of having my explanations twisted into extenuations, I propose, in the following pages, to elucidate the perplexing Turkish Question as impartially as I am able.

The deep-seated hostility which exists in America against the Turk is traceable to several causes: chiefly, no doubt, to the atrocious treatment which he has accorded in the past to the Christian minorities, particularly the Armenians; secondly, to religious prejudice and political propaganda, of which it is difficult to say where one ends and the other begins; thirdly, to our disappointment and chagrin at the come-back of a supposedly vanquished and dismembered nation; and lastly to the Turk's persistent refusal to defend himself.

For his treatment of the Armenians there are ex-

planations—to which I shall devote a succeeding chapter—but no possible excuses. For what he has done to this people, no matter how unpopular or unlikeable or exasperating they may be, he deserves the unqualified condemnation of every right-thinking person.

The political propaganda against the Turk has extended over many years, and, though it has frequently been justified by the facts, as in the case of the Bulgarian atrocities which provoked Gladstone's famous indictment, it has, far more often, been utilized by European nations to excuse their own political or territorial designs. Austria-Hungary flooded Europe with anti-Turkish propaganda when, in 1908, she annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece used it during their war against Turkey—the First Balkan War—and prior to that war, to distract the attention of the world from the barbarities perpetrated by their own *comitadji* bands on the Turkish inhabitants of Macedonia. Italy employed it when she initiated one of the most unjustifiable wars in modern history for the acquisition of Tripolitania. Throughout the four years of the Great War the Allies used propaganda against the Turks as a recognised weapon, just as they used it against the Germans. And England and Greece have used it ever since. To this protracted long-range bombardment, the ammunition for which has consisted in about equal parts of truths, half-truths, and untruths, the Turk has had no opportunity to reply; first, because he has had few, if any spokesmen in Western Europe and the United States, and secondly, because the cables and the columns of the West European

and the American press have been, to all intents and purposes, closed to him. So far as being able to place his side of the case before the outside world went, the Turk has been, and in a large measure still is, *incomunicado.*

I wonder if Americans are aware that fully nine-tenths of the despatches regarding Near Eastern affairs which appeared in American newspapers during the four years immediately succeeding the Armistice came from anti-Turkish sources. During this period Constantinople was under the control of the British, Smyrna was occupied by the Greeks, and Angora was almost as effectually cut off from the outside world as though it had been on Mars. Is the American public so credulous as to suppose that despatches favourable to the Turks would have been passed by the British censors in Constantinople or by the Greek censors in Smyrna and Athens? Hardly. It should be realized, furthermore, that about 90 per cent of all cable despatches sent to American newspapers by their European correspondents are relayed through London—and think not that the British cable censorship ended with the war. As a result, the British and their Greek allies, being in control of all telegraphic means of communication between Turkey and America, were enabled promptly to place their own versions before American readers and to delay or suppress any despatches attempting to give the Turkish side of the question. (It is true that a certain number of "mail stories" came through the postal channels, but they were usually stale when they reached the newspaper offices in this country and, if printed at

all, were generally relegated to the back pages, so that their effect was negligible.) It was, then, from this unilateral "news" that the American public formed its opinions on the Turkish situation.

A characteristic example of the determination of the Allies to keep from the world anything which might arouse sympathy for the Turks was the suppression of the report of the international commission (which included the American General Summerall) sent to Smyrna to investigate the atrocities committed by the Greek army when it occupied that city in May, 1919. Though the Allies had published broadcast accounts of the excesses committed by the Turks, they refused to let the world know what had been done to Turks by Christians.

In forming its estimates of the Turk, his character, aims, problems, and future, the American public has placed too much reliance on the opinions and prophecies of arm-chair experts and "scrap-book" authorities, few of whom possess any first-hand knowledge of the lands and peoples of whom they write. Two of the most widely read and quoted books on the Near Eastern Question of recent years were the work of a man who, though a close student of Near Eastern affairs, had never set eyes on the Turkish coast-line. Probably 99 per cent of the editorials on Turkish affairs in American newspapers are written by men who have themselves never been in Turkey and who, I will wager, do not number a real Ottoman Turk among their acquaintances. Comparatively few of the American correspondents who reported the peace conferences at Lausanne and else-

where possessed any first-hand knowledge of Turkey and the Turks save such hasty impressions as they received during a few weeks spent in Constantinople or on flying visits to Smyrna and Angora. How, then, can these writers, no matter how earnest and sincere, discuss with any degree of authority the sentiments and aspirations of the inhabitants of such remote and inaccessible regions as Anatolia, Armenia, Kurdistan, Cilicia, 'Iraq, Arabia? Yet it is from the writings of men who are, all too often, themselves but half-informed that Americans have formulated their judgments of what is, perhaps, the most involved and misunderstood problem in the world.

"How long will it take me to get an understanding of the Turkish Question?" a well known American publicist once asked Sir Edwin Pears, the foremost European authority on the subject of his time.

"I really couldn't say," was the dry answer. "I have only lived in Turkey forty years."

Another cause of American misconceptions regarding Turkey is traceable to the missionaries, and I say this in no disparagement of them. The extent of American missionary effort in the old Ottoman Empire is quite generally known, but its effect on American public opinion is not, perhaps, so widely recognised. Very early in their work the American missionaries discovered that Moslems do not change their faith, so, debarred from proselytism among the Turks, they devoted their energies to religious, educational, and medical work among the Christian minorities, particularly the Armenians. For half a century or more these mis-

sionaries provided our chief sources of information on conditions in the Near and Middle East, and by them public opinion in the United States on these subjects was largely moulded. Having been rebuffed by the Moslem Turks and welcomed with open arms by the Christian Armenians, it is scarcely surprising that they espoused the cause of the latter and that the reports which they sent home and the addresses which they delivered when in America on leave of absence were filled with pleas for the oppressed Christians and with denunciations of their Turkish oppressors. The congregations which supported the missionaries accepted this point of view without question, and there was thus gradually developed, under the ægis of our churches, a powerful anti-Turkish opinion.

At the close of the Great War it was the missionaries, and those associated with them, who were largely instrumental in establishing the remarkable organization which eventually came to be known as the Near East Relief, for whose work, I might add parenthetically, no praise can be too great. But many of the Near East Relief workers were missionaries, or associated with missionary work, or under missionary influence, so, as was only to be expected, the organization, whose ramifications extended into every community in the United States, automatically became the champion of the Turkish Christians, though it is only the barest justice to add that it was equally assiduous in affording relief to destitute Moslems. I am not suggesting, mind you, that the Near East Relief indulged in political activities —though there was never any doubt as to where its

sympathies lay—but, consciously or unconsciously, it became an instrument of anti-Turkish propaganda, for the missionary workers realized to the full that the establishment of an independent and powerful Turkish state would inevitably spell the extinction of much of the influence and the curtailment of many of the privileges which they had exercised in Turkey before the war.

"Home folk," says Mr. William T. Ellis, an acknowledged authority on Eastern affairs, in "The Saturday Evening Post," "seem to have the notion that there are atrocities still taking place wherever Turk and Christian meet, although there have been no atrocities since the sacking and burning of the Turkish villages, and the ravaging and killing of their residents, by the retreating Greek Army, with subsequent reprisals by the Turks at Smyrna. From Western Thrace come reports of killings of Moslems by Greeks, but this is retail business as compared with the former wholesale transactions in Asia Minor. Atrocity stories have been vastly overdone; some of the more recent massacres have been wholly nonexistent. One of the local (Constantinople) members of the press end of a relief organization told some friends openly that he could only send anti-Turkish despatches to America because that is what gets the money!"

In attempting to gain the ear of the American public, Turkey has been enormously handicapped by the insignificant number of Turks living in this country. The Greeks and Armenians in the United States outnumber the Turks by at least thirty to one. Consequently, though Americans rarely, if ever, meet a Turk, they

are constantly coming in contact with Greeks and Armenians. Whenever an American engages in conversation with a Greek boot-black or fruit-dealer, or with an Armenian rug merchant, the chances are nine out of ten that the latter will seize the opportunity to denounce the Turk. These attacks do not amount to much individually, perhaps, but, in shaping uninformed American opinion, their cumulative effect is tremendous. The bright-eyed young Greek who runs the shoe-shining parlour down the street has probably told you, with many gestures and much circumstantial detail, what the Turks did to his relatives when the armies of Mustapha Kemal entered Smyrna in September, 1922. But there isn't any Turk to tell you what the Greeks did to *his* relatives when the armies of Constantine retreated across Anatolia during the months preceding. So, you see, you are looking at only one side of the medal.

Still another reason why we know so little of the Turk is due to the Turk himself—to his failure to place his own case before the world. This is not because his leaders have been blind to the enormous value of skilfully directed propaganda, or because they disapprove of it, but, first, because they cannot afford to undertake an extensive publicity campaign—Turkish finances do not permit of establishing news bureaus in foreign capitals, of subsidizing writers and lecturers, of circulating photographs and motion-pictures—and, secondly, because they are convinced that foreign prejudice against them is so great that it would be a hopeless undertaking. "What is the use?" Sultan Mohammed VI remarked,

with a gesture of discouragement, when, during an audience at Yildiz Kiosk in the summer of 1922, I suggested that, if the Turks were misrepresented and misunderstood abroad, the remedy lay in their own hands. "Your newspapers and magazines wouldn't print articles by a Turk if we sent them, and your public wouldn't read them if they were printed, or believe them if they read them. Even if we could afford to send to America men who are qualified to present the Turkish view, and who could address an American audience in its own tongue, would they be given an impartial hearing?"

Now I can readily understand and make allowance for the public's errors and misconceptions, for it has had, after all, no means of knowing that it has been systematically deceived, but I can find no excuse for those newspapers which, clinging to a policy of vilifying the Turk, failed to rectify the anti-Turkish charges printed in their columns even when it had been proved to the satisfaction of most fair-minded persons that they were unjustified. A case in point was the burning of Smyrna in September, 1922. There was scarcely a newspaper of importance in the United States that did not editorially lay that outrage at the door of the Turks, without waiting to hear the Turkish version, yet, after it had been attested by American, English, and French eyewitnesses, and by a French commission of inquiry, that the city had been deliberately fired by the Greeks and Armenians in order to prevent it falling into Turkish hands, how many newspapers had the courage to admit that they had done the Turks a grave injustice? Again,

there was the outcry raised by the exchange of populations. Instead of denouncing this measure as a crowning example of Turkish barbarity, why did not our newspapers inform their readers that the scheme was not initiated by Turkey but by the League of Nations? The Turks had enough crimes to answer for, Heaven knows; why charge them with those of which they were not guilty?

The language of the American press at the time of the Greek debacle in Anatolia showed another strange misapprehension of the true situation in the Near East, and of our inability, or that of the Allies, effectively to intervene. It is an axiom of prudent and dignified diplomacy, and should be an axiom of prudent and dignified journalism, that one's words should be only a very little bigger than one's power to back them up. Yet, when the news of Mustapha Kemal's victorious onset, and the annihilation of the Greek army, reached this country, press and pulpit joined in threats to "kick the Turk, bag and baggage, out of Europe" or to "wipe Turkey off the map." How empty and childish were these threats was shown with disconcerting conclusiveness, ere many weeks passed, for the Turks, instead of being kicked out of Europe, not only occupy more European territory to-day than they did when they entered the war in 1914, but they have literally kicked the Europeans out of Turkey, their bags and baggage, however, remaining in the possession of the Turks. I realize that there are few things so difficult as sudden readjustments of opinion, but, on the other hand, there

are few qualities so essential for competent journalism, particularly in the discussion of foreign affairs.

The truth of the matter is that the American press and public, their judgment warped by prejudice and misinformation, have backed the wrong horse in every event on the Near Eastern race-card. They loudly proclaimed that the Turk could never come back to Europe—and he promptly came back further than he was before. They asserted that Armenia must be free and Smyrna must be Greek—but it is the Turkish flag that to-day flies unchallenged over both those regions. They declared that the Western powers would never consent to the abolition of the Capitulations—yet they have been abolished. They insisted that Turkey should be permitted neither an army nor a fleet—yet her army to-day is one of the most efficient in the world and her war-ships have been restored to her by treaty. The American attitude reminds me of the lawyer who found his client in prison.

"But you shouldn't be in jail, my good man," he announced.

"I know damned well that I shouldn't," was the answer, "but I am."

Much of our astonishing ignorance of Turkish character and conditions is traceable to our national propensity for generalization—always an inexact and dangerous method of estimating another people, and doubly dangerous in the case of a people as complex as the Turks. I have heard Americans who pride themselves on being well informed, men whose opinions are listened to with respect, betray ignorance of Turkey and

the Turks which would be ludicrous under other circumstances. We have based our conceptions of the whole nation on the reports of missionaries disappointed in their efforts at proselytism, on what we have been told by Greek and Armenian propagandists, on the novels of Pierre Loti and Demetra Vaka, and, if we have taken a Mediterranean winter cruise, on brief glimpses of dark-skinned men in red fezzes and baggy trousers (Armenians, Syrians, Greeks, or Jews as likely as not) in the bazaars and coffee-houses of Levantine coast-towns.

We profess to be scandalized by the Turk's practice of polygamy (it was, in fact, practised by less than 4 per cent of the population) while at the same time reading with perfect equanimity of Abraham, Jacob, Solomon, and other patriarchs of the Old Testament who were likewise polygamists, or of certain American bankers and railway magnates who also maintain establishments which differ in little, save their illegality and secrecy, from Turkish harems. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that, though polygamy in Turkey was abolished by law in 1922, two years after the establishment of the Nationalist Government, it was not prohibited in the United States until nearly a century after the Revolution and in Utah was openly practised until very recently. When one of the most respected Mormons in Utah died not long ago his four wives sat beside the casket during the funeral services! We deplore the position of Turkish women, overlooking the fact that Turkey is the only country in the world that has elevated a woman to the position of a cabinet

minister, and forgetting that Turkish prostitutes are unknown. The compulsory wearing of the veil by Turkish women was abolished about the same time that steps were being taken to abolish the flogging of women in the State of Georgia. We think of the Turk as intolerant and a hater of Christians, conveniently forgetting that he has not only always left non-Mohammedans free to follow their own religions but that, in one chapter of the Koran, Mohammed explicitly directs his followers to help the Christians if they are building a church and need assistance. Does anyone assert that Moslem missionaries would receive the same tolerant treatment in this country, or that they would be accorded the same privileges and immunities, that our missionaries have received since the beginning of their work in Turkey? We hold the Turk up to execration as a barbarian, disregarding the testimony of the British and French soldiers who served against him that he was always a clean fighter, and ignoring the fact that throughout the war he steadfastly refused to avail himself of that most inhuman of all civilized inventions, poison gas, on the ground that it was not a gentleman's weapon. We denounce him, and quite rightly, for his massacres of the Armenians and Greeks, forgetting, however, the countless thousands of Turks who have been massacred by Armenians and Greeks in Asia Minor, by Armenians and Russians in the Caucasus, by Greeks in Albania and Crete, and by Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgars in Macedonia and Thrace. We regard the Turk as a tyrant—and he was—yet he gave to the people of Mesopotamia and Syria a considerably greater measure of autonomy than

they enjoy to-day under the British and French mandates, which explains, perhaps, why a majority of the inhabitants of those regions want him back again. We are fond of saying that grass dies wherever a Turkish hoof has trod—an old Greek proverb, by the way—yet, as I can attest from personal knowledge, Thrace and Anatolia were productive and comparatively prosperous until the Greek bayonet drove out the Turkish plough. We claim that the Turk cannot be trusted, which is hard to reconcile with the fact that from one end of Western Asia to the other the unsupported word of a Turk is invariably taken in preference to the oaths of any of the brands of native Christians. And how, pray, if he is as black as he has been painted, can we explain the fact that every foreigner who really knows the Turk—diplomats, consuls, army and naval officers, traders, even missionaries—are outspoken in their liking for him as an individual? It pleases us to think of him as negligible from a political or military point of view, yet in less than three years he annihilated a Greek army far superior in equipment and resources to his own, recovered the whole of Anatolia and Eastern Thrace, compelled the Italians to abandon their pretensions to Adalia, forced the French to evacuate Cilicia and alter in his favour their Syrian frontier, constrained the British to withdraw from Constantinople and the Dardanelles, cost Lloyd George his premiership, Gounaris and his colleagues their lives, and Constantine his throne, won a whole series of diplomatic victories over Curzon and Venizelos, tore up the obnoxious Treaty of Sèvres and substituted for it the

Treaty of Lausanne, concluded a treaty with the United States which was almost wholly in Turkey's favour, and shook the prestige of the Allies and the larger prestige of Christendom to its foundations. European and American apologists have attempted in vain to minimize these remarkable achievements. The facts speak for themselves.

CHAPTER III

THE MOSAIC THAT WAS TURKEY

To understand the American system of government you must have a knowledge of American history. And a historical background is equally indispensable if one is to understand and form an intelligent opinion on the Near Eastern Question. So gradually did it attain its present dimensions, so preoccupied were we of the West with affairs nearer home, and, when we attempted to grasp it, so bewildered were we by its complexities and contradictions, that the average well informed American has only a vague and usually erroneous idea of what it is all about. He has read in the newspapers of the Christian minorities, of the Caliphate, of the Capitulations, of the Ottoman Debt, of the Ecumenical Patriarch, of the concessions, of Armenian massacres and Greek deportations, of special interests and spheres of influence and mandates, of the Sykes-Picot and Franklin-Bouillon agreements, of conferences at San Remo and Lausanne, of the Mudania Armistice and the Treaty of Sèvres, of happenings in Cilicia and Kurdistan, in the Dodecanese and Mosul and the Pontus; but to him these isolated incidents usually have about as much significance as so many pieces in a complicated mosaic,

and he has given up in despair attempting to correlate them. Moreover, the avalanche of information, near-information, and misinformation, of charge and counter-charge, of denunciation and denial which have filled the columns of the newspapers and magazines ever since the close of the Great War have only served to increase his mental confusion. Therefore, even at the risk of repeating some facts with which you are doubtless already familiar, I will endeavour to piece the mosaic together so that you may view it in its entirety.

It should be clearly understood, to begin with, that there is small truth in the statement most familiar in regard to Turkey—the assertion that the Turks are a savage and marauding race which, sweeping down from the wastes of Central Asia, destroyed Roman law, Greek art, and the Christian faith in the Eastern Empire. The ruin which the Turks found about them when their rule began in the last year of the thirteenth century they did not make.

Prior to Mohammed's flight from Mecca in 622, which may be said to mark the beginning of Mohammedanism, that portion of the Eastern Roman Empire which corresponded to present-day Turkey was substantially Christian, for up to that time every successive inroad from the barbaric East had in the end adopted that religion. It was a land dotted with Greek temples and under the influence of Hellenic civilization, in which the Greek tongue was spoken or known by all. But after the camel-driver of Mecca had spread his creed, every tribe which forced its way into these provinces of Byzantium had already turned to Islam—the Moslem's

name for his faith—or quickly became converted to it.

This final remnant of the Roman Empire, this last home of its culture and learning, was first attacked by the Arab caliphs of Baghdad and Damascus. During the twelve years (632-644) which followed the death of Mohammed, the Arabs, armed with their new faith, overran Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia; but Asia Minor, in spite of occasional Arab invasions, rode out the storm. For four hundred years more Roman law, Hellenic culture, and the Christian faith were more secure in north-western Asia than they were in Europe itself.[1]

The Byzantine debacle may be said to have begun at Menzikert in 1068—two years after the Norman invasion of England—when the Seljuk chieftain, Alp Arslan, who was a Moslem, smashed the army of Byzantium and carried his horsetail standards to the shores of the Mediterranean. During the next two hundred years and more the Byzantine Empire was an anvil for successive hammer-blows, during which the whole of its Asiatic territories were laid waste. For a time, during the last quarter of the twelfth century, the country was subjected to Kurdish rule, when these men of the mountains, under their chivalrous leader Salah-ed-Din (whose name we have corrupted into Saladin), drove the Crusaders out of Palestine. During the next quarter-century the Kurds, forced back into the curving line of mountains which run from the head of the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, were succeeded by the Mongol hordes

[1] See Dr. Talcott Williams's "Turkey, a World Problem of To-day," from which portions of this historical résumé are drawn.

of Jenghiz Khan and of Hulagu, his grandson, who swept the land, destroying its centres of commerce, learning, and religion, and extended their depredations over nearly half of the inhabited world. So that in the closing years of the thirteenth century, when Othman, the head of the Othmanli clan and the first of that remarkable dynasty which ruled in Turkey for upward of six hundred years, began to enlarge the little realm which his father, Ertoghrul, had founded at Angora, and which came to be known in time as the Empire of the Othmanlis, or Ottomans, the world about him was already destroyed and lay in ruins.

It will be seen, therefore, that four great races, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Tartars, and the Turks, have furnished at one stage and another the rulers of the Asiatic area of Turkey. And the latter still rule in Turkey, though the people whom they rule descend from many past races. If these different races had sorted themselves out we might have in Turkey a country like the United Kingdom. But in Turkey these races are scarcely anywhere apart and alone. The shock of a long succession of conquests has shattered them all, so that, instead of presenting an ordered and well laid mosaic (I have used this simile before, but no matter), they have been assembled without relation or design. Amid this tangle of peoples, the Turkish majority forms a race apart—a governing people with a profound self-respect and a marked sense of superiority. It was the Turks who made and maintained the old Ottoman Empire, pouring out their blood to hold its frontiers on

three continents. Their sultan was a Roman emperor and every Turk was a Roman citizen.

Now it should not be assumed that the Turks of to-day, in spite of the fact that they call themselves Othmanlis, are all, or nearly all, descended from the warriors of Othman. Some of them, no doubt, can trace their descent to that source, just as some Americans can show a genealogy which leads back to the Pilgrims, but, generally speaking, they comprise the descendants of every race which has ever lived in Turkish territory and which has accepted Islam. The early conquerors enslaved the men and married the women of the races they conquered, so that to-day it is difficult to find among the Turks a clear racial type, the modern Turk being in physique, as a result of these centuries of intermarriage with other races, almost wholly European. Successful leaders also attracted to their standards mercenaries of different tribes and tongues, the corps of janizaries maintained for centuries by the Turkish sultans being no doubt an illustration of what happened during many generations in Asia. The Turks, after taking Constantinople, demanded a certain number of male children of Christian parentage, who were brought up as Turkish soldiers, with few ties and principles save unquestioning obedience to their officers and a highly developed lust for loot. There was thus developed a large class of Turkish subjects who, though speaking the Turkish tongue and practising the Moslem faith, had absolutely no Turkish blood in their veins. Were it possible, therefore, to trace the genealogy of an average Turk of to-day back through the ages, it would

be found that he has inherited the blood of Mongol, Persian, and Arab, of Kurd and Armenian, of Greek and Latin and Jew, as well as many of their characteristics and qualities.

During the six centuries which preceded the founding of the Turkish Empire by Othman, it is probable that a Christian population of some thirty or forty millions had been replaced by a much smaller population of Moslems and a tenth of their number of Christians, which is not far from the proportion to-day. How much of this was due to force or fear, and how much to a willing change of faith, no one can ever know. In their wars of conquest, however, the Moslems exhibited a degree of toleration which puts many Christian nations to shame. When Christian Europe was burning its heretics at the stake, Moslem Turkey was permitting its heretics to follow their own religions unmolested. All conquered peoples were asked to become Mohammedans. If they persistently refused they were permitted to practise their own religions without further hindrance upon payment of a head-tax, or tribute, which automatically exempted them from performing military service, for none save Moslems were called upon to serve in the Turkish armies. Those who refused both alternatives were put to the sword. This left within the conquered territories only two classes: Moslems and Christians, conquerors and conquered, rulers and ruled. Let it be clearly understood, however, that, though the two classes have always been separated by a religious barrier, it has created surprisingly little friction between them, mosques and churches frequently being

found in close proximity to each other. The antagonism between the Christians and the Moslems is, to a large extent, a development of the last half-century, and religion and nationality have had comparatively little to do with it. The real cause, as I shall show later on, was the encouragement of political irredentism among the Christian minorities by the great powers in order to further their own selfish ends.

Though millions of conversions were doubtless brought about by political or economic pressure, or by the argument of the sword, there is ample evidence that many turned willingly to the religion of Mohammed. But there remained a considerable minority of the population that could be neither coerced nor cajoled into accepting Islam. In the mountains of eastern Asia Minor was a small but sturdy Armenian kingdom, whose peoples had been Christians from very early days. Greek populations remained along the coasts. The mountain ranges of Syria sheltered numerous Christian communities, and other Christians were found in the seaports. As the years passed the same thing happened to these Christian minorities that has happened in Roman Catholic lands to Moslem, Protestant, and Jew. Debarred by their religion from attaining political position, they devoted themselves to trade and banking, quickly becoming the natural channels of European commerce, which eventually passed almost entirely into their hands. Thus the Christians steadily waxed rich while their Moslem competitors became poor, and, human nature being what it is, increasingly envious, resentful, hostile.

These Christian communities of Asiatic Turkey, scattered like white patches over the green field of Islamism, present the one insoluble difficulty in the solution of the many issues, social, economic, and religious, which go to make up the Turkish Question. It is a problem with which the best minds of three continents have struggled for years without finding an answer. Their presence, as Dr. Talcott Williams has pointed out, is a proof that the sultans of Turkey and the Moslems they ruled were not wise enough to see that, in the early stages of the development of a people, unity of faith must be secured or all union will be lost. The European races, he reminds us, have understood this perfectly and have acted upon it, for, down to very recent years, nearly all European countries placed heavy disabilities on any departure from the established religion, and some still do. Rumania's legislation against the Jew is an example.

If Turkey had as negligible a Christian population as Persia, or Siam, or Japan, there would have been none of the issues which have racked the country, none of the incidents which have shocked Christendom. If the Christian populations were only isolated in clearly defined areas, instead of being inextricably mixed with the Moslems, autonomous provinces could have been established and protected by definite boundaries, as in Protestant Ireland. As a matter of fact this was done, and with success, in the Lebanon, in Syria, which was organized as an independent province under the administration of a Christian governor, though remaining an integral part of the Ottoman Empire.

But nowhere else, save in areas so small and circumscribed that they could not be used to form states, is there a Christian population that is large enough to stand alone. Smyrna was claimed and occupied by the Greeks, but even the Greek figures showed a narrow majority of Christians, and this majority was made only by including all the Christian elements of the population, Orthodox, Armenian, Uniat, and Latin. In Aidin, the vilayet of which Smyrna is the *cheflieu*, the Moslem population was admittedly larger than all the Christians put together. In the region corresponding to ancient Armenia the Armenians are nowhere, save, perhaps, in a few towns, in a majority over the Moslems. This the Armenians themselves admit, but claim that, were the administration of the region placed in their hands and backed up by a European army of occupation, the Moslems would eventually move elsewhere in preference to living under Christian rule.

In spite of public clamour in Europe and the United States for the "liberation" of the Christians of Turkey, clear-thinking statesmen have realized that, unless the Moslems could be killed off or, as Mr. Israel Zangwill has suggested in his solution of the Palestine problem, driven from their homes and fields, theirs by every law, there was no possibility of securing independence for the minorities. President Wilson believed that an independent Armenia could be established and maintained, but events have proved conclusively that he was wrong. Even were it possible to dot Turkey with a series of independent enclaves, with a clear Christian majority in each, precisely the same issues would arise

on a smaller scale, for the Moslems, though they will accept a rule which is foreign and external, will not submit to domination by their Christian neighbours. Though it is almost impossible for us, as Christians, to understand it, the followers of Mohammed feel about living under the rule of Christians precisely as Christians would feel about living under the rule of Jews.

In Turkey, before the Nationalists came into power, the word "Turk" was used only to designate a Mohammedan. It was never employed in speaking of Christians, even though they were Turkish subjects and spoke only the Turkish tongue. In its ordinary sense, therefore, it signified a religious belief, and that alone. The same might have been said of the other names for nationality, such as Armenian, Greek, Syrian, and the like. Outside of Turkey the term "Greek," for example, implies a Hellenic subject, but in Turkey it meant that the person to whom it was applied was a communicant of the Greek Orthodox Church, even though he and his fathers before him had been Turkish subjects for six hundred years, even though he had never set foot in Greece, even though he had no knowledge of the Greek language, even though, as frequently happens, he had no Greek blood in his veins. Likewise, the term "Armenian" was not used to describe the inhabitants of the region known as Armenia (the majority of whom are Turks) but applied to all who were members of the Gregorian Church. In other words, the various elements which compose the diversified population of Turkey were not classified by race, as in most other countries, but by religion. It was as though, in the

British Isles, only the members of the Church of England were called English, all Roman Catholics were referred to as Irish, and all Scotchmen were designated as Presbyterians.

But the Nationalists have wiped invidious distinctions out by announcing that all the citizens of the New Turkey, regardless of their religious persuasion or racial descent, shall henceforward be Turks. This is what Ismet Pasha meant when he said at Lausanne, "In Turkey we want only Turks; we do not want Greeks or Armenians." Though this utterance was promptly seized upon by anti-Turkish propagandists as meaning that the Greeks and Armenians must go, what he really intended to convey was that in the reconstituted Turkish body politic there was no longer room for hyphenates. In other words, he meant precisely what Theodore Roosevelt meant when he proclaimed that there was no room in the United States for German-Americans, or Irish-Americans, or any other brand of hyphenates, but only for Americans. In order to deceive the outside world, the Greek and Armenian propagandists have deliberately misinterpreted this and similar statements, yet nothing is further from the intention or desire of the Nationalist Government than to expel from Turkey any one who desires to remain and is prepared to behave as a loyal citizen of the common fatherland.

Though full and even fairly reliable statistics as to the proportion borne to one another by the various religions of Turkey are impossible to procure, it is safe to say that of the fourteen and a half million inhabitants

of Turkey (as that state is constituted in 1923) approximately twelve millions are Mohammedans, slightly more than a million are Greeks, and about the same number are Armenians, the balance being composed of Latins, Jews, and other religions. For centuries these non-Moslems lived in peace under the Constantinople Government. Exempted by Turkish law from military duties, they lived not only in peace but in a degree of prosperity which not all of the sultan's subjects were able to attain. Positions of power in the Government were open to them without reference to their status as religious dissenters, the premiership of the empire having more than once been filled by Armenians.

The Greeks of Turkey have always been a seafaring race. Consequently a fringe of Greek population is to be found along the whole Turkish littoral, from the ports of the Pontus, on the Black Sea, through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles, and so down the seaboards of Anatolia and Syria to Palestine, where Hellene gives way to Semite. Everything, or nearly everything, connected with the maritime life of the nation—steamship lines, wharfage facilities, fisheries—is in Greek hands. But the Greek is likewise banker, trader, lawyer, doctor, in all of which his chief rival is the Armenian. Occasionally he is an agriculturist, and when he tills the soil he does it well, as attested by the fields, vineyards, and gardens along the Ægean. And it is well to remember that, until infected by the bacillus of irredentism which swept the countries of South-Eastern Europe during the last quarter-

century, the Greek of Turkey has, generally speaking, lived on terms of amity with his Moslem neighbours.

Though the majority of the Armenians still dwell in their historic home-land, an Alpine region of snowy peaks, sombre forests, green meadows, lakes, and torrents, which extends diagonally across Asia Minor from the Russian Caucasus to the Gulf of Alexandretta, they are also to be found in every part of Turkey. Constantinople and its environs alone contain nearly two hundred thousand, most of them engaged in banking, trade, the professions; frequently rich and generally prosperous, and all with a well established reputation, whether justified or not, for acuteness rather than strict honesty. But the mass of the people are peasants, tillers of the soil—cringing and submissive when in the minority, arrogant and bitterly vindictive when the tables are turned. They possess many admirable qualities, including exceptional intelligence and a passion for education, but these are counterbalanced by other characteristics which are frequently intolerably irritating and have lost them many friends. By no stretching of the truth could they be called popular even by their most ardent champions. The hatred in which they are held by the Turks is *not* due, however, to the fact that they are Christians, as the outside world has been led to believe, but to their persistent indulgence in political intrigue and sedition. It is not at all surprising that the Armenians, animated by a deep sense of nationalism and a passion for independence, should have availed themselves of every opportunity that offered to conspire against their Turkish rulers, but neither is it

surprising that the Turks, exasperated by their seditious activities and particularly by their flirtations with other nations, notably Russia, have come to regard them as a menace to the state and have taken measures to suppress them. It was the unjustifiable brutality of these repressive measures to which the West objected and which has enabled the Armenian to pose as a Christian martyr, when, in reality, his religion has had very little to do with his persecution.

The established faith in Turkey is Islam, and always will be, just as the established faith in England is Protestantism and always will be. And, just as the king of England is Defender of the Faith, so the Turkish sultans were caliphs of Islam. It is Britain's good fortune, however, that, although its population contains a number of Christian sects besides the established Church of England, it contains no important non-Christian minorities except the Jewish minority, which is found in all countries. But in Turkey, as I have pointed out, there are a number of non-Moslem minorities which, in spite of the fact that they have been permitted to manage their own affairs in their own way, in accordance with the tolerance prescribed by the Koran, have remained dissatisfied, resentful, and frequently openly rebellious. Thus Turkey has been called upon to face a religious problem such as no other government has known. That her efforts to solve it have been unintelligent, and all too often characterized by oppression and abominable cruelty, no one will attempt to deny.[1]

[1] See the articles by Mr. Clair Price in "Current History," 1922-23.

The non-Mohammedan population of Turkey is divided into religious communities known as *millets*—a Turkish word which, translated literally, means "religion-nation." Each of these communities had its recognised head, usually known as a patriarch, who was duly accredited to the Porte and who exercised a considerable degree of temporal as well as spiritual power, many of the privileges granted them by the Turkish Government being almost extraterritorial in character. Thus we had the anomaly of certain sections of the population, though Turkish subjects, largely immune from Turkish laws and dealing with the Government through their religious heads very much as foreign nations dealt with it through their ambassadors and ministers. It is worthy of note that in 1462, at a period when throughout Europe religious minorities had no recognised rights worthy of the name, a Turkish sultan —Mohammed II, the conqueror of Constantinople—at the height of his power not only re-established the Greek patriarch on the ecumenical throne, but granted to the Greeks of Turkey a whole series of special privileges which they have enjoyed down to the present day.

The *millets* recognised by the Government of the old empire were (1) the Greek community, known as *Rum* (or Rome), which included all members of the Orthodox Church recognising the Ecumenical Patriarch, whose seat was at Phanar, in the Stamboul quarter of Constantinople; (2) Latins, or Catholics, who use the Roman liturgy, consisting of the descendants of the Genoese and Venetian settlers and other native Catholics of the

Latin ritual; (3) Armenian Gregorians, under their patriarch in Constantinople, but giving supreme spiritual allegiance to the Catholics at Echmiadzin, in Russian Armenia; (4) Armenian Catholics, under a patriarch at Constantinople; (5) Syrian Catholics, under a patriarch at Mardin; (6) Chaldean Catholics, under a patriarch at Mosul; (7) Syrian Jacobites, under a patriarch at Mardin; (8) Protestants, consisting chiefly of converts among the Armenians; (9) Melchites, under a patriarch at Damascus; (10) Jews of two rites, now separately recognised; (11) Bulgarian Catholics, under the Bulgarian Exarch; (12) Maronites, chiefly in the Lebanon, under the Patriarch of Antioch, who resides in the monastery of Kannobin; (13) Nestorians, or Assyrian Christians, whose patriarch has his residence at Kochannes, in the mountains of Kurdistan.

Let it be clearly understood, now, that all subjects of the Ottoman Empire were registered as members of some recognised religious community—Mohammedan, Orthodox, Latin, Armenian, Jewish, Maronite, and so on. A man without a religion was literally a man without a country so far as the Turkish Government was concerned. Every non-Moslem was required to claim his rights through the religious head of his respective community, these religious heads conducting their negotiations with the minister of justice in the Ottoman cabinet, just as the envoys of foreign powers conducted theirs with the minister of foreign affairs. If his claims were denied by his patriarch he had no redress.

The power possessed by the heads of the *millets* is

strikingly illustrated by an episode that occurred in the middle of the last century, when the Armenian patriarch violently excluded all Evangelicals from the church and from their inherited rights as Armenians. He declined to recognise them as members of his race and not only refused to protect them and secure for them justice but he directed a bitter propaganda against them. Thus, these excommunicated "Protestants," as they were sometimes called, were the legal possessors of no rights or privileges in the empire that any one was bound to respect, they were wholly without representation, and it was only through the intervention of the British legation that they were eventually recognised by the Ottoman Government as a separate community.

It should be added that, save when they have occasionally joined forces to achieve some political end, as the Greeks and Armenians did during the years immediately succeeding the close of the Great War, the bitterest jealousy and antagonism has prevailed between the various *millets*. The quarrel between the supporters of the Greek Patriarchate and the schismatics of the Bulgarian Exarchate resulted in drenching Macedonia in blood; while the jealousies between the various Christian sects in Jerusalem, repeatedly ending in riots in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, have frequently scandalized Christendom.

Even if the patriarchs had confined themselves to guarding the legitimate interests of their communities, the *millet* system would have been a bad one, demoralizing to good government. But they did not thus confine themselves. Instead, they engaged in political plots

against the Turkish Government on every possible occasion. The Armenian Patriarchate plotted with the Russians for years, with a view to bringing on war between Russia and Turkey; it fomented the Armenian revolution at Van for the purpose of taking the Turkish armies in the rear while they were fighting the Russians; and, when Russia collapsed in red ruin, it allied itself with the French in Cilicia, helping to raise and equip an Armenian Legion for service against the Nationalists. When, in the spring of 1923, the triumphant Nationalists gave the Armenian patriarch the choice of abandoning his political activities or leaving Constantinople, he chose the latter.

The Greek Empire ceased to exist as an independent political entity in 1453, but for four hundred and seventy years more it continued to exist as a religious, commercial, and political force at Phanar, the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch. When the Turkish Government collapsed in 1918 and Venizelist Greece stepped into the place vacated by Russia in the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, the Greek Patriarchate, on March 9, 1919, broke off its ancient relations with the Porte, advising its communicants throughout Turkey that they were no longer Ottoman subjects and forbidding their participation in the Turkish elections. It was as though, when Italy declared war on Austria, the Vatican had taken sides with Austria, as the modern representative of the Holy Roman Empire, and had advised all Roman Catholics that they were no longer Italian subjects, and no longer owed allegiance to the Government at Rome. The Nationalists promptly retaliated

by refusing to recognise the patriarch, whereupon the thousands of Orthodox communicants in Turkey were left without any religious representation whatsoever. This did not greatly matter so long as the Greeks remained in the ascendant, but after the collapse of the Constantinople Government and the Greek debacle in Anatolia in 1922, the Greeks of Turkey, no longer having a recognised head, found themselves in a most trying and humiliating position, which was somewhat relieved, however, when the Government at Angora authorized the establishment of a new Orthodox community, known as the Turkish Orthodox, recognising as its head an Orthodox priest of Turkish sympathies, whose seat is at Caesarea, in Asia Minor.

One of the first acts of the Nationalists, upon taking over the civil administration of Constantinople, was to order the expulsion of the Greek Patriarch of the East on the perfectly legitimate ground that he had fomented treasonable activities among his followers. The decree of expulsion was later rescinded, but the patriarch, shorn of his power and with his prestige irretrievably shattered, voluntarily abdicated in the summer of 1923 and retired to a monastery on Mount Athos.

Christian congregations throughout the world, particularly in the United States, violently denounced the Angora Government for its attitude toward the Greek and Armenian patriarchs. But I wonder if our religious sympathies, as Christians, have not blinded us to the facts. Let us ask ourselves what *our* attitude would be if the Jews, let us say, maintained at Washington a politico-religious representative of super-

ambassadorial rank who claimed sovereign powers so far as all Jews residing in the United States were concerned, who openly proclaimed that the interests of Judaism were paramount to those of the American nation, who actively conspired against our Government and institutions, and whose official residence was a hotbed of sedition. Would we tolerate such a condition? And, if not, how can we consistently expect the Turkish Government to do so?

Few questions in recent times have aroused such widespread interest and sympathy as that of the future of the Christian minorities in Turkey. It is a problem whose solution has baffled the ablest European statesmen. As a result of the savage excesses committed by both sides during the period of the Great War and immediately thereafter, the situation has been immensely complicated. Though it now appears probable that the Moslems and the Armenians will come to an amicable understanding, all prospect of the Greeks and Moslems settling their own differences and living together in amity was doomed to certain failure by the Greek invasion of Anatolia, for ever since then the Turks have hated and distrusted the Greeks as much as the Greeks have feared and distrusted the Turks.

But let us consider first the case of the Armenians. This people, whose numbers in Turkey have been reduced by massacre and deportation until they probably do not number much over a million, are to-day faced by as tormenting a decision as any race has ever been called upon to make. As the Turks have definitely refused to assign them a territory of their own, where

they can live under foreign protection; and as no other country, save only Soviet Russia, seems inclined to offer them a refuge, they must apparently take their choice between becoming homeless wanderers on the face of the earth, like the Jews of past generations, or of remaining in Asia Minor under such guarantees as the Nationalists see fit to give them. It is a hard choice, but personally I am convinced that the days of Armenian persecution are ended, and that, if they are willing to abandon their dreams of independence, and to settle down as loyal citizens of the new Turkish state, a safe and prosperous future awaits them, for the men who are shaping the policies of Nationalist Turkey are by no means blind to the economic value of the Armenian minority, so long as it is a loyal one. The way to peace for the Armenians lies in their abandonment of political irredentism. Once that is abandoned, and the Armenian leaders abroad cease their attempts to stir up trouble, there is no reason why this distracted and unhappy people should not dwell in their historic home-land in security and prosperity.

Though the Turko-Greek exchange of populations raised a cry of horrified protest throughout Christendom, I must confess that I fail to see the deep iniquity of the arrangement. It should be pointed out, in the first place, that this proposal for the exchange of the Christian minorities of Turkey for the Moslems in Greece is not a new one, nor did it originate with the Turks. In 1914, immediately after the Second Balkan War, Venizelos, then prime minister of Greece, made the same proposal to the Turkish Government, which

accepted it in principle, but the outbreak of the World War interrupted the negotiations. It was proposed again, after the Greek debacle of 1922, by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, who was sent to Anatolia by the League of Nations, his suggestion being approved by the League and adopted by the conference at Lausanne.

That it has worked, and will work, great hardship on several million peasants there can be no denying, but every one who knows how bitter is the Turkish hatred for the Greeks, since the atrocities perpetrated by the Greek armies in Anatolia, cannot but realize that at least a generation must elapse before the two peoples can dwell together in amity or even safety, and that, drastic as a wholesale exchange of populations may seem, dreadful as must be the uprooting from the soil of families who have lived on it for untold generations, it will, in the long run, save thousands of innocent lives.

Let us, for the sake of justice, place ourselves in the Turks' position. If, during the Great War, the Germans had invaded the United States with the announced intention of annexing to their empire virtually the whole of our Atlantic seaboard; if citizens of German descent, whose families had lived in America for generations, had actively assisted the invader, either by joining his armies or organizing guerrilla bands; if they had burned farmsteads, destroyed orchards, raped women, tortured and murdered non-combatants, and, when finally defeated, had wantonly destroyed the city of New York in order to vent their rage and chagrin, would we not have been amply justified, after the war was over, in insisting that these hyphenates, who,

despite their American citizenship, had always been Germans at heart, must go? That is almost an exact parallel of what happened in Anatolia.

The Government at Angora not only recognises the impossibility of protecting the Greeks, should they be permitted to return, from the vengeance of their Turkish neighbours, but it realizes that there can be no hope of peace for the new Turkish state so long as a large, seditious, and vindictive element remains within its borders. Whether, from the point of view of Turkey's economic interests, the expulsion of the Greeks is a wise move, only time can show. But the Turkish leaders assert that, of the two evils, they prefer industrial stagnation to internal discord, and I, for one, do not blame them.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE TURKS CAME BACK

WHEN Time grants it the justice of perspective, the policy pursued by the Allies towards the Turks throughout the five years between the signing of the Mudania Armistice and the signing of the Peace of Lausanne will be recognised as one of the most inexcusably short-sighted and unintelligent courses of action of which great nations were ever guilty. When the Turkish resistance suddenly collapsed in October, 1918, the banks of the Bosphorus were strewn with the wreckage of the ramshackle and worm-eaten Ottoman ship of state. Defeated, demoralized, defenceless, discouraged, Turkey was completely at the mercy of the Allies. The Turks were weary of war and disgusted with their late leaders, who had led them into disaster, and the country seemed willing to say "Kismet" to any scheme, whether of partition or protectorate, that their conquerors might decide upon. The whole wretched business could have been settled then and there by a prompt, just, and equitable peace. But selfishness, distrust, jealousy, secret diplomacy, imperialistic ambition, injustice, hatred, greed, delayed a settlement, and this delay gave the Turks the breathing-spell they needed, opened their eyes to the fate that was in store for them, and

enabled them to construct, from wholly new and sound material, a ship which was able triumphantly to ride out the storm. So that when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in July, 1923, the whole Near East was littered with the débris of Allied ambitions, Allied diplomacy, and Allied prestige. History chronicles few such amazing reversals of fortune.

In order to understand the factors which produced the final Turkish triumph it is necessary briefly to review the events of these five pregnant years—a period which, unless all signs fail, promises to mark the beginning of an entirely new chapter in the history of Asia and in the relations between East and West.

Most of the jealousies and dissensions which, by splitting the unity of the Allies, delayed the final peace settlement and provided the Turks with the opportunity of which they so successfully took advantage, are directly traceable, in my opinion, to the clandestine understanding known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The history of the secret diplomacy of the Great War contains no more amazing episode, to my way of thinking, than the story of how two men, Sir Mark Sykes, an English traveller and Orientalist, and George Picot, one time French consul at Damascus, at a meeting held in May, 1916—when the world conflict had yet two and a half years to run—coolly apportioned between their respective countries the whole of Western Asia without consulting their allies and without consideration for the wishes and inherent rights of the inhabitants of the regions concerned. By this pernicious agreement, which was duly ratified by the Governments of Great

Britain and France, the futures of twenty million human beings were decided as callously as though they had been that many cattle.

The basis of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was, briefly, that the French sphere should include Syria, Cilicia, and southern Armenia, with "autonomy under French protection" for Damascus, Aleppo, Urfa, Deir-es-Zor, and Mosul; that Palestine should be an international state, and that Mesopotamia, with an outlet to the Mediterranean through the port of Haifa, should be in the British sphere, which should also include the whole of Arabia. In 1918, however, Lloyd George persuaded Clemenceau to cede Mosul to the British, in return for which he agreed to support French claims to Syria. But during the Versailles Conference a misunderstanding arose over this agreement. The British insisted that Mosul had been given them unconditionally, while the French maintained that they had surrendered it only on the understanding that they would be given a share of its oil. Thus began the rift between the two principal Allies.

Let it be understood, now, that, in their Near Eastern policies, Great Britain and France are, and always have been, diametrically opposed. Britain has never looked with a friendly, or even a neutral eye on France's Near Eastern aspirations, and France has viewed with corresponding suspicion the steadily increasing British ascendancy in that region.

From the day that she embarked on her Turkish campaigns England's aims, though ostensibly altruistic, were in reality imperialistic, for that term is certainly

applicable to the scheme for acquiring control of virtually the whole of Arabic Asia, thereby linking up her Indian and African empires. Her statesmen were shrewd enough to realize, however, that world opinion, though it would doubtless consent to the British acquisition of Mesopotamia, a remote region of which it knew little and for which it cared less, would certainly view with disapproval and suspicion the acquisition of any portion of Turkey proper. They further realized that were Britain to violate the repeated pledges she had made to her Moslem subjects in India by annexing Turkish lands, it might well provoke an Indian uprising, a contingency which was by no means remote.

But if England could not afford to defy public opinion in the West and antagonize her Moslem subjects by the annexation of Turkish territory, neither could she afford to have on her flank a bitterly hostile Turkey which might conceivably again become strong enough to threaten British interests in Western Asia. The British had to devise some scheme for permanently weakening Turkey by indirect means. They solved the problem, or thought they had solved it, by encouraging Greece's territorial ambitions at the expense of Turkey. In return for such support it was assumed that England could rely on Greece as a vassal ally in the Levant just as France was counting on Poland to play a similar rôle in Eastern Europe. To put it bluntly, Greece was to be England's cat's-paw and pull England's chestnuts out of the fire. From the very outset, therefore, the Lloyd George Government supported the Greek claims in Thrace and Anatolia, just as it supported the claims

of King Hussein of the Hedjaz to the Arab lands, calculating that it did not particularly matter what flags flew over those regions so long as their governments remained under the British thumb, as it was fully intended that they should. England has never greatly cared who exercises the shadow of power provided she has the substance.

As to the British plans for Constantinople we can only speculate. There are sound reasons for believing, however, that, despite all denials, Great Britain intended to establish a great stronghold at the Dardanelles, just as she had established other strongholds at Gibraltar and Suez, thereby making of the Mediterranean what would have been, to all intents and purposes, a British lake. Whether this was the end she really had in view may be open to question; the point is that France and Italy were convinced that that was her intention. Nor were their suspicions allayed by the fact that the creation of a strong Greek vassal state as a counterpoise to French and Italian naval strength in the Mediterranean emerged more and more clearly as the days passed as the dominating purpose in the policy of Great Britain.

Again and again during the Near Eastern crisis the question was asked in America: "Why do France and Italy pursue such a policy as they have adopted in the Levant? Why do Christian nations take the side of the Turks against their ally, England?" The answer is so obvious that one wonders why the question was ever asked. The basis of the French policy toward Turkey was that England was gaining in the Levant at the

expense of France. The basis of Italian policy toward Turkey was that England's ally, Greece, was gaining in the Levant at the expense of Italy. Though Italy is a great Mediterranean power, whose losses in the World War were enormous, all that she secured in the general division of the Turkish loot was a recognition of her claims to a "sphere of influence" on the southern coast of Asia Minor; while Greece, whose behaviour during the early years of the war had bordered on the treacherous, and whose losses, after she entered the conflict, were comparatively insignificant, emerged from the struggle with an area—on paper at least—fully half as large as that of continental Italy. And France had to content herself with Syria and Cilicia as her share of the inheritance of the Sick Man. Great Britain, on the other hand, had quietly absorbed Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Arabia. She had acquired what Mr. Winston Churchill called her "new Middle Eastern Empire." As one writer put it, "She has taken over Western Asia, she has taken all that lies between Cairo and Calcutta, and between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, and she has, in addition, occupied Constantinople." With Greece as her vassal, Britain's influence, if not the British flag, was predominant over the whole of that vast region lying between the Balkan Mountains and the Straits of Malacca, between the Caspian and the Cape of Good Hope. That is why France and Italy, fully alive to the menace to their own interests as Mediterranean powers offered by Anglo-Greek designs, in sheer desperation finally ignored the tripartite pact and concluded separate agreements with

the Turkish Nationalists. That is why France withdrew from Cilicia and Italy from Adalia, thus releasing a large number of Turkish troops for use against the Greeks in Anatolia and the British at the Dardanelles. That is why France and Italy supplied the Turks with arms and munitions. Their interests were better served by having at the eastern end of the Mediterranean a strong and friendly Turkey than a hostile and British-controlled Greater Greece. It was, in short, a rivalry of imperialism.

The Armistice of Mudania, which marked the end of Turkey's participation in the Great War, was signed at midnight on October 30, 1918. In accordance with its terms the Allies immediately occupied Constantinople and the Dardanelles and steps were taken toward the disarmament and demobilization of the Turkish forces in Anatolia. Though the Turkish Question was discussed by the peacemakers assembled at Paris in the spring of 1919, the drafting of the Turkish treaty was not seriously taken in hand until the following February. This delay was due partly to the hope that the United States would become a party to the settlement; partly to disagreements between the Allies themselves arising out of the allocation of mandates for the non-Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire.[1]

The twelfth of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, on the basis of which the Central powers had capitulated, provided that these non-Turkish territories should receive "unmolested opportunity of autonomous develop-

[1] See the articles by Mr. Clair Price in "Current History," to which I am indebted for much valuable information relative to the development of the Nationalist movement in Turkey.

ment." Article 22 of the Treaty of Versailles indicated that some at least of them would be recognised as independent nations under such mandatories as they would be willing to accept. The principal claimants for these mandates were Great Britain and France, who, as I have already explained, had three years previously come to a secret understanding (the Sykes-Picot Agreement) about their future spheres of influence in Western Asia.

The most serious conflict of interests was between France and the Hedjaz (a British creation whose king, Hussein, was a British pawn) over the Arab districts of Syria, of which I shall have more to say in a succeeding chapter; but questions also arose as to the possibility of reconciling the claims of France, Italy, and Greece to territory in Asia Minor with President Wilson's pledge to respect the unity of the Turkish people, and as to the disposition of Constantinople. The last-named difficulty was settled at the London Conference in February, 1920, when it was announced that Constantinople would remain the Turkish capital, though the Turks were informed that this concession was conditional on their good behaviour. Two weeks later the Conference of San Remo gave mandates to Great Britain for Mesopotamia and Palestine and to France for Syria and Cilicia; a mandate for Armenia was declined in turn by the League of Nations and by the United States Senate. At last, on May 11, the draft treaty was handed to the Turkish delegates at Sèvres, who signed it on August 10, 1920.

It is interesting briefly to review this document in the

light of later events. Under the terms of the treaty the coastal area of the Dardanelles, the Marmora, and the Bosphorus were placed for certain purposes under the control of a Commission of the Straits to be composed of representatives of various powers. Constantinople was left to the sultan with the proviso that it would be forfeited if Turkey violated the terms of the settlement. Turkey ceded to Greece virtually the whole of Thrace west of the Chatalja Lines, as well as Tenedos, Imbros, and the other Ægean Islands under Greek occupation. But she might not fortify those islands in immediate proximity to the straits and she was required to sign a treaty which would safeguard the rights of the Turkish minorities in her territory. Smyrna, with the surrounding strip, which included about half of the vilayet of Aidin, was to be administered by Greece, under Turkish sovereignty, for five years, after which the territory might annex itself to Greece by plebiscite. Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, and the Hedjaz were recognised as independent states, the first three, however, under mandatories. Kurdistan had autonomy conferred upon it. Italy received Castelorizo, and the twelve small islands of the Sporadi group (the Dodecanese) which she had occupied during her war with Turkey in 1912. The British protectorate over Egypt and the British annexation of Cyprus were recognised. The chief feature of the military clauses was the proviso that Turkey might maintain no military forces except the sultan's bodyguard, consisting of about seven hundred men, and gendarmes and frontier guards not exceeding fifty thousand in number.

According to the terms of this amazing treaty, therefore, the Ottoman Empire was to be deprived of approximately two thirds of its territory and three fourths of its population. From it was to be taken an area of not far from 440,000 square miles with inhabitants numbering upward of twelve millions. In other words, some eight million Turks were to be confined in a territory, with virtually no ports on the open sea, but little larger than the State of California. Notwithstanding the promises and protestations made by the Allies over and over again that the war was not waged for conquest, and that they had in view no territorial aggrandizement, the indisputable fact remained that the vast territories of which the Turks were thus deprived passed, under the guise of mandates, protectorates, spheres of influence, occupied areas, internationalized zones, or outright annexations, under the control of the Allied nations. Few more hypocritical or trouble-breeding documents have ever been inscribed on parchment.

Now let us go back and see what was happening in Turkey while the Allies were dickering and squabbling among themselves at Paris, London, San Remo, Spa, and Sèvres. For the Turks those were indeed momentous years. Their country was prostrate under the heel of the conqueror. Allied forces occupied strategic points along the Dardanelles, Allied war-ships patrolled the Marmora and swung at anchor in the Golden Horn, Allied troops garrisoned Constantinople, which was under a military rule as arbitrary and repressive as ever the Germans enforced in France or Belgium. The

censorship was in full force; freedom of speech and of the press were forbidden; secret arrests and deportations were of almost nightly occurrence. Allied police and spies were everywhere. In the Pera quarter of the capital Greeks and Armenians, discarding their fezzes for European head-gear, paraded the streets, delirious with enthusiasm. Early in 1919 the Greek and Armenian patriarchs broke off relations with the Ottoman Government and informed the members of their communities that they were no longer Turkish subjects. The Turkish Parliament still sat in Stamboul, but apathetic, dejected, hopeless. At the Sublime Porte everything had drifted into the most hopeless confusion. The Sultan, Mohammed VI, a kindly, weak old man, dwelt in seclusion at Yildiz while the affairs of the empire, or rather the fragments that remained of it, were administered by the grand vizier, Damad Ferid Pasha, a shrewd, resourceful, unscrupulous politician who, if he had not sold himself to the British, was completely under their thumb. Across the Bosphorus local defence organizations had sprung up to hold the abandoned frontiers of Asia Minor, which had been turned loose within a cordon of Allied battleships and bayonets to shift for itself.

At this crisis in the affairs of the nation a new actor—the most forceful and brilliant that has come out of the East in a generation—stepped upon the Turkish stage. There are men whose names live in history as saviours of their country and people, and I take it that that of Mustapha Kemal Pasha will live as such. Born at Salonika, he entered the military profession, rising

steadily, by sheer ability, until he was a general of division and a member of the general staff. When Enver organized the Committee of Union and Progress at Salonika, Kemal, an ardent patriot and consumed by a flaming hatred of injustice and oppression, threw in his lot with the Young Turks. He took part in the revolution of 1909 which overthrew Abdul Hamid, but he broke with the committee as soon as it became apparent that Enver and his associates were merely continuing the Hamidian régime under another name. Kemal commanded a division during the Gallipoli campaign and became a national hero, but his popularity only served to arouse the jealousy of Enver, who had become all-powerful, and he was dismissed from one command after another, finally being rusticated to Asia Minor. He was in Adana when Enver's policy of repeated offensives brought the war to that bitter ending which Kemal had so insistently predicted. With the signing of the Mudania Armistice on October 30, 1918, Enver and his fellow-members of the Committee of Union and Progress fled from the capital to escape the fate which the Allies had in store for them. Then Kemal returned to Constantinople.

What he saw and heard in that city of chaos only served to confirm him in his conviction that if Asia Minor, the historic home-land of the Turks, was to be salvaged from the wreck of what had so lately been the Ottoman Empire, it was the Turks themselves who would have to do the salvaging, for, with the refusal of the United States to take a hand in the Near Eastern settlement, there vanished Turkey's last hope of foreign

aid. Though the terms of peace had not been published, it was common knowledge that the Allies were determined on the dismemberment of the empire. Even the reliance the Turks had placed in the implied promise of President Wilson, as contained in the Fourteen Points, that Asia Minor would be left to them, was shattered by rumours of Greek designs against the integrity of this essentially Turkish region, rumours which, as it proved, were well founded. Nor was there left in Turkey any government worthy of the name which might serve as a nucleus for an organized resistance. The Parliament was still in session, it is true, but the peace-at-any-price Liberal Entente party was in control, and this party was dominated by the grand vizier, Damad Ferid, who was, in turn, a creature of the British. Had the sultan been a sovereign of more vigorous personality, he, by virtue of his prestige as caliph of Islam, might have provided the rallying-point that was so desperately needed by the distracted country, but Mohammed VI, like the Parliament, was completely under the domination of Ferid and the British.

Kemal quickly realized that the only hope of saving Anatolia or, indeed, of preserving more than a shadow of Turkish independence, lay in consolidating the local patriotic societies and defence organizations of Asia Minor into a political party strong enough to overthrow the Liberal Entente faction and gain control of Parliament, which would then be in a position to force Ferid from the grand vizierate and replace his pro-British policy by a pro-Turkish one. But, with Allied troops

in occupation of Constantinople, it was obvious to Kemal that he could not remain there to work out his plans with any degree of safety, for scores of Turks suspected of opposition to British designs were being arrested nightly and deported to Malta. Let me say, parenthetically, that the harsh and unjust methods of repression employed by the British were as unintelligent as they were ineffective, for, instead of crushing the Turkish resistance, they only crystallized it. Though the exercise of tyranny may compel temporary submission, history has repeatedly shown that it invariably inflames resentment into rebellion.

But fortune was with Kemal, for, in the early spring of 1919, the minister of war ordered him to Asia Minor to assist in the demobilization. No sooner did Ferid learn of Kemal's departure, however, than he realized his war minister's blunder and the consequences that it might entail. He at once ordered Kemal to return to the capital, but the latter, realizing that to obey the order was to invite incarceration within the barbed-wire lines of Malta, brusquely refused. As Ferid was the head of the sultan's Government, this refusal constituted a defiance of the sultan himself, so that technically Kemal was now in open revolt against his sovereign.

Anatolia now became the scene of a bitter struggle between Kemal and his supporters on the one hand and the partisans of Ferid on the other. The provincial officials who were loyal to Ferid arrested Kemal's agents and deported them to Constantinople, while the Kemalists, beginning in the eastern provinces, accorded

the same treatment to Ferid's officials. Turkey, in her darkest hour, had split into two camps. One faction, headed by Ferid, called itself the party of the Caliphate; it consisted of all who, from motives of fear or greed, advocated Turkey's throwing herself on the tender mercies of the Allies—the peace-at-any-price men. The other faction, of which Mustapha Kemal was the champion, then just coming to be known as the Nationalist party, was composed of all that was best in Turkey, students, intellectuals, officers of the old army and navy, professional and business men, peasants, all inspired by patriotic ardour and grim determination—the independence-at-any-price men.

Let it be clearly understood, now, that when Mustapha Kemal returned to Anatolia in the spring of 1919 to start the Nationalist movement he had no intention of violating the terms of the Mudania Armistice. He did not go there to organize an armed resistance against the Allies or to set up a rival government to that at Constantinople. He went there for the purpose of building up a new political party which would be strong enough to gain control of the Turkish Parliament, which was dominated by traitors and enemies, and thus offer legitimate political resistance to the Allied scheme of partition. But his policy was abruptly transformed when, in May, 1919, the news of the Greek occupation of Smyrna, with the accompanying butchery of unarmed Turks, burst like a thunderclap over Asia Minor and sent whole provinces flocking to Kemal's standard.

Why the Allies consented to the insane project of a Greek army, unaccompanied by other troops, invading

a country so overwhelmingly Turkish as Anatolia has never been satisfactorily explained. It was said at the time that it was intended as a demonstration against the activities of Kemal and his embryo Nationalist party, whose rapid growth was beginning to perturb the Allies. It seems much more likely, however, that it was a scheme devised by England and France to forestall Italy, who, dissatisfied with the portion of the Turkish loot allotted to her, and bitterly hostile to Greek aspirations in Asia Minor, had laid her plans for a secret, sudden seizure of Smyrna, thereby confronting her Allies with a *fait accompli.* Whatever may have been the pretext for the occupation, it was the Allies' employment of the Greeks in carrying it out, and the atrocites perpetrated by the Greek soldiery on the city's defenceless Moslem inhabitants, which led Mustapha Kemal to tear up the armistice and which fanned the flickering spark of Turkish Nationalism into a fierce flame of anger and patriotism that swept Asia Minor from the shores of the Marmora to the hills of Kurdistan.

The gulf between the Constantinople Government and the Nationalists was made still wider when, on July 11, 1919, Ferid declared Mustapha Kemal an outlaw and despatched a makeshift army against him. The Anatolian peasant is a docile and obedient person with a one-track mind, who theretofore had always been content to leave the settlement of political questions to the politicians, but when he found that Ferid's Army of the Caliphate, as it was grandiosely called, was composed in part of Greeks and Armenians, his suspicions were aroused, whereupon he promptly gave his

support to Kemal, though in so doing he broke a tradition of unswerving loyalty to the sultan-caliph which was as old as Turkey itself.

In order to voice a protest against the proposed partition of Turkey and to decide on measures to be taken against the Greeks, Kemal summoned a congress, composed of representatives of the various defence organizations of Anatolia, to meet in September, 1919, at Erzerum. Two months later a second congress, this time composed of duly elected delegates from all the Asiatic provinces, assembled at Sivas and there laid the real foundation for the Nationalist movement by forming a National Council of twelve members which was to sit in continuous session at Angora, where it was in easy communication by telegraph with Constantinople. For, in spite of Ferid's action in outlawing Kemal, the Nationalists had not yet definitely broken with the Ottoman Government. Throughout the summer and autumn of that year patriotic Turks from all walks of life, including a number of Nationalist deputies from the Parliament in Stamboul, evading the cordon which the Allies had thrown about the capital, came pouring into Angora afoot and on horseback and in creaking ox-carts, clad in a hundred different disguises. Meanwhile Mustapha Kemal, in addition to the tremendous task of organizing this new party, found himself burdened with the additional responsibility of raising and equipping, in a war-weary, impoverished, and isolated country, a new army to hold the Greeks in check. Mark my words, the day will come when the achievements of this young Turkish leader on the bleak Anatolian up-

lands will be bracketed with those of another soldier-statesman whose shoulders were likewise bowed with the responsibility for the fate of a nation as he paced the snowy slopes of Valley Forge.

Ferid had now lost the support of the country. Even the emasculated Parliament, which he had kept alive that it might lend a semblance of legality to his schemes, was showing signs that it would not much longer accept his dictation. But he still retained the support of the British, who were formulating the Treaty of Sèvres. But at the same time the National Council at Angora was formulating an ultimatum of its own—a statement, phrased in uncompromising language, of the limits to which Turkey was prepared to go in negotiating a treaty of peace with the Allies. This laconic document, shortly to become famous as the National Pact, demanded the unqualified recognition of the political, judicial, and economic independence of Turkey, which was to comprise the whole of Asia Minor and of Eastern Thrace. It was Turkey's last word; it was her Declaration of Independence. This momentous document was immediately transmitted to the Parliament in Constantinople, which, to Ferid's dismay, adopted it on January 28, 1920. The British now stepped in to save their puppet, employing the same despotic methods which they had used in Egypt, in India, and in Ireland. On April 11 they suppressed the Turkish Parliament, arresting and deporting to Malta some forty Nationalist deputies and more than a hundred other persons who were known to be in sympathy with the Nationalist movement. A more short-sighted course of action it

would be hard to conceive, for the dissolution of the Constantinople Parliament gave the Nationalists the very excuse they needed for convening a new Parliament at Angora, where it would be beyond the reach of foreign intimidation or interference. By thus forcing the transference of the seat of power from the Bosphorus to the heart of Anatolia, the British lost the only hold they had on the Government of Turkey and provided the Nationalists with an opportunity of which they were quick to take advantage.

Twelve days after the enforced dissolution of the Constantinople Parliament, the Nationalist party, now become the dominant power in Asia Minor, convened at Angora (April 23, 1920) a new Parliament under the title of the Grand National Assembly and under the presidency of Mustapha Kemal. The first step of the National Assembly was to declare itself the sole lawful government of Turkey, invested with full executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Though it retained a shadowy allegiance to the sultan as caliph of Islam, his temporal powers, as Emperor of the Ottomans, were abolished. Thus ended an empire and a dynasty which, beginning with Othman, had shaped the destinies of Turkey for upward of six hundred years.

At its first session the National Assembly passed two acts which clearly indicate the character, scope and aims of the new régime—the Government of the Grand National Assembly, to give it its official title. One of these bills consisted of a reiteration of the National Pact, which thus became the virtual constitution of the New Turkey. The other, entitled the Constitutional Law,

outlined the new form of government, which is unique among all the governments of the world in that, though a democracy, it is neither a constitutional monarchy nor a republic and has neither king nor president.

On May 11 the Allies, having put the final touches to the Treaty of Sèvres, communicated it to Ferid, ordering him to lose no time in giving it the Government's approval. This treaty proposed, as I have said elsewhere, to turn over to Greece the whole of European Turkey up to the Chatalja Lines, thus bringing Greek bayonets almost within sight of the minarets of St. Sophia; to restrict the garrison of the capital to the seven hundred men of the sultan's bodyguard: to place a broad zone of territory on either side of the straits under international control; and to place what remained of Asia Minor, after Armenia, Cilicia, and the Smyrna district had been detached from it, under the permanent military, financial, and economic control of the Allies.

Though there was no longer a Parliament in Constantinople, Ferid, who never permitted himself to be troubled by legal technicalities, lost no time in summoning eighty prominent Turks to meet at Yildiz Kiosk to approve the treaty. The proceeding was wholly unconstitutional, of course, but, as he might have said to his British employers, "What is the constitution between friends?" Permitting no discussion of the treaty, he ordered those who were in favour of it to stand, and, anticipating trouble, he whispered to the sultan to stand also. Now, Mohammed VI, weak and vacillating though he was, was also the padishah, the Shadow of God, the caliph of Islam, so that when he rose in his place the

assembly, as a matter of course, rose with him. That was all that the astute grand vizier wanted, and he declared the treaty unanimously adopted by a standing vote. But he was interrupted by a bluff old soldier, Field-Marshal Ali Riza Pasha, who, in a voice trembling with emotion, told Ferid that those present had risen out of respect to the sultan and not in token that they approved or accepted the treaty; that the meeting had no authority to decide the question; and that, even if it had, it could not approve the treaty as long as the Parliament at Angora, and, indeed, the whole of Asia Minor, were in revolt against it. But Ferid, obedient to his orders, brushed these objections aside by again declaring the treaty adopted, adding in an audible voice that, so far as he was concerned, Asia Minor could go to the devil. Though the treaty was signed at Sevres on August 11 by two delegates appointed by Ferid, it had already become apparent that it would never be ratified by the Grand National Asembly, which was now the *de facto* Government of Turkey.[1]

This placed the Allies in a most perplexing and embarrassing position. Neither England, France, nor Italy, exhausted by four years of conflict, had the men or money to prosecute a long and costly struggle in the interior of Anatolia against a patriotic, warlike, and determined people fighting on their home grounds. Moreover, public opinion in those countries was, as their respective Governments quickly discovered, solidly opposed to embarking on any such adventure. The truth of the matter was that the peoples of Western

[1] See the articles by Mr. Clair Price in "Current History."

Europe had had enough of war. When it became apparent that none of the great powers would consent to undertake a punitive campaign against the Turkish Nationalists, the Greek premier, M. Venizelos, realizing that the territorial gains with which his country had emerged from the war were at stake, announced that Greece was prepared to accept the task of subjugating the Turks, and to this proposal Lloyd George enthusiastically acceded. For, as I have already remarked, Britain, if she was to realize her imperialistic ambitions in Western Asia, could not afford to permit a new, united, and vigorous Turkey to rise from the ashes of the old Ottoman Empire. No wonder that the Lloyd George Government was enthusiastic over Venizelos's offer. The British, as one cynic put it, were prepared to fight the Nationalists as long as a Greek was left alive.

Just how far Lloyd George promised to go in backing up the Greek venture has not been made clear. There is no possible doubt, however, that he pledged Venizelos the moral support of Great Britain, and there is every reason to believe that he agreed to aid the Greeks with money, arms, and munitions.

The reader will have noted, perhaps, that, in my account of events from the beginning of 1920 on, I have substituted "British" for "Allies." I have done so because the conflict between the Allies and the Turks had by that time resolved itself into a conflict between the British and the Turks, both France and Italy having definitely broken away from the leadership of Lloyd George, whose policy they disapproved.

In February, 1920, Nationalist forces had begun operations against the French in Cilicia, which had been assigned to France in conformity with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. They defeated and drove out the French garrisons, captured the city of Mar'ash, and massacred the Armenians, who, relying on French protection, had organized the Légion Arménienne as an auxiliary of the French army and had risen in revolt against the Turks. After a year of intermittent warfare the French, realizing that the cost of holding Cilicia against a determined Turkish resistance promised to outweigh any possible gain, came to an agreement with the Nationalists by which, in return for certain commercial concessions, France agreed to evacuate the region, taking as the northern boundary of her mandate the line of the Baghdad Railway. In the meantime Italy, sensing the coming storm, had hastily withdrawn from Adalia.

As a result of the French and Italian understandings with the Nationalists, the world was now treated to the amazing spectacle of France and Italy supplying Turkey with arms and munitions for use against the British and Greeks. France not only turned over to the Nationalists the stores of war material which she had collected in Cilicia, but provided them with aviation instructors. During the two years that followed there was a continuous flow of military stores into Turkey, through Adalia, Mersina, and Alexandretta, across the Syrian frontier, and from Soviet Russia, so that the Nationalist armies were in certain respects tolerably well equipped when Mustapha Kemal launched his great offensive in the autumn of 1922.

The Greeks started their advance inland in May, 1920, a year after the occupation of Smyrna, under the personal supervision of King Constantine and with a British military mission attached to the High Command, the Nationalists slowly falling back before them. Summer found the Greeks astride the line of the Anatolian Railway from Eski-Shehr to Afium-Kara-hissar. Then ensued a two years' stalemate, which gave the astute Nationalist leaders time to temper the formidable weapon which they had been secretly forging in the recesses of Asia Minor.

From the very outset unprejudiced military experts recognised that the plan of campaign of the Greek High Command was a rash one and promised eventual dis-aster, for as the Greeks advanced into the interior their lines of communication became correspondingly at-tenuated and vulnerable. Their only chance of success lay in encircling and smashing the Turkish army. But Mustapha Kemal had no intention of permitting his army to be encircled and smashed. Strategically his position was a strong one, for he had at his back a vast and friendly country into which he could retreat in-definitely, while every mile that the Greeks advanced imposed an additional strain on their transport, which was already strained nearly to the breaking-point.

From the standpoint of aircraft, heavy artillery, tanks, motor transport, and other adjuncts of modern warfare, it was a fourth-rate army that opposed the Greeks, but in experience, discipline, and valour it had no superior in the world. It was an army of veterans. Many of Mustapha Kemal's men had been fighting,

almost without cessation, for a dozen years; they wore on the breasts of their ragged uniforms ribbons which showed that they had served in the first war with Greece, in the war with Italy, in the First and Second Balkan Wars, and in numberless campaigns in Hedjaz and the Yemen; they were the same indomitable fighters who had driven the flower of Britain and France from Gallipoli, who had compelled the capitulation of a British army in Mesopotamia, who had thrown back the Russians in the Caucasus, who had served against Allenby in Palestine.

To us in America, blinded by prejudice and propaganda and five thousand miles from the battle-line, Mustapha Kemal and his ragged followers appeared as rebels, guerrillas, outlaws, who were attempting to obstruct the conclusion of a just and wise peace. We placed them in the same category as Villa and his brigands. Their resistance was a blow to our self-complacency as victors; we resented the fact that a nation which had been beaten and which had been sentenced to pay the price of defeat by dismemberment should presume to raise its head. Yet, when all is said and done, there was scant difference, save in the tongue they spoke, between these men of Anatolia and those other "rebels" who, nearly a century and a half earlier, had fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill. These despised Nationalists were fighting for the same object for which our forefathers fought, against an enemy a hundred times as mighty as was Washington's—the right of self-government, the principle of independence.

By the spring of 1922 it was plain to every one that

the stalemate in Anatolia could not continue much longer, that the Greeks must either advance or retreat. To retreat meant an enormous loss of prestige, if not, indeed, the sacrifice of all their territorial gains in Asia Minor, and, as the Greek king and his advisers realized, it might well mean a revolution at home, where the people had been kept in complete ignorance of the true situation. So, with the concurrence of the British military mission, it was decided to risk everything on a final thrust, a supreme effort to break the Turkish resistance and capture the Nationalist capital.

Now, the Turks did not want to fight, if it could be avoided, as is proved by the fact that in the spring of 1922 they sent to London an envoy, Fethi Bey, with certain proposals to lay before the British Government. These proposals, I understand, included the freedom of the straits on the sound basis of demilitarization and the withdrawal of the Greeks from Anatolia. But Lloyd George and his foreign minister, Lord Curzon, that "very superior person," apparently hypnotized into the belief that Greece had victory within her grasp, refused even to receive the Turkish envoy, who, after lingering for some weeks in the British capital, gave up his mission in despair and returned to Angora. His report made it clear to the Nationalists that they need expect no mercy from England, whereupon Mustapha Kemal set about the preparations for launching his great offensive.

During the initial stage of their advance the Greeks received encouragement, for they succeeded in encircling the left flank of the Nationalist forces and sent them

into a disastrous retreat. But some seventy-five miles to the rear, and only forty miles in front of Angora itself, the Turks reformed on a north-and-south line along the Sakaria River, where Mustapha Kemal himself assumed command. Here the Greeks sought to repeat their manœuvre, but Kemal pulled down his forces to meet them. Crossing the Sakaria, south of Kemal's lines, the Greeks now drove some fifty miles due east in a vain attempt to find the Turkish left. With the Turkish positions now shifted to an east-and-west line, about fifty miles from Angora, the Greeks hammered away for twenty-one days in a desperate effort to break through—a struggle which will some day be recognised as one of the world's decisive battles. It soon became apparent, however, that the Turkish strength had been greatly underestimated, that the Greek transport was being taxed beyond its capacity, and that the Greek position must shortly become untenable. Followed then the Greek retreat to the old Eski-Shehr-Afium line, during which the Greek High Command, by ordering a systematic devastation of the whole countryside, employed precisely the same tactics which the Germans employed when they evacuated north-eastern France. But the Greeks went the Germans one better, for, in addition to upward of a hundred Turkish villages in part or whole, they massacred in cold blood hundreds of Turkish non-combatants, leaving behind them a broad swath of blood-stained, smoking ruins. Such were the "modern Crusaders," as the Greeks styled themselves, the troops whom Christian England had delegated to enforce her will upon the

Turks, who carried banners emblazoned with the cross of Christ and were accompanied by priests.[1]

The Greek front collapsed on August 26. Almost over night the Greek army ceased to exist as a fighting force and the despised Nationalists remained in undisputed mastery of the field. Followed the flight to the coast of the panic-stricken survivors and the destruction of Smyrna. The beaten Greeks, soldiers and civilians alike, were ignominiously thrown out of Asia; the shadowy Ottoman Government in Constantinople evaporated; the sultan-caliph, deposed by a decree of the Grand National Assembly, fled from his late capital on a British war-ship, and a new caliph, possessing only spiritual authority, was elected in his stead; and, barring the small British forces entrenched at the Dardanelles, the whole of Asia Minor, from the Black Sea to Syria, from Russia to the Ægean, was again in Turkish hands.

The defeat of the Greek army was the last thing that the British Government had anticipated and the last thing that it could afford, for it spelled disaster to Britain's whole grandiose scheme for making herself mistress of Western Asia. British naval and military reinforcements were rushed to the Dardanelles, a great fortified camp was established at Chanak, and Lloyd George, completely losing his head, appealed to the British dominions, and even to the Balkan states, for aid in repulsing the Turk. In the United States press

[1] For a fuller account of this remarkable campaign see the articles by Professor Arnold J. Toynbee and Mr. Clair Price in "Current History" and the former's "The Western Question in Greece and Turkey."

and pulpit became hysterical in asserting that the Turk should never come back to Europe.

But it quickly became evident that the world, including the British Empire, had had enough of fighting. France, instead of coming to England's assistance, lost no time in withdrawing her forces from the Dardanelles and in cementing her relations with the Nationalists. Italy, overjoyed at the discomfiture of Greece, sat on the fence. Jugoslavia and Rumania, more concerned with their own troubles than with those of their neighbour, were held in check by the menacing attitude of Moscow. And a few weeks later the peoples of Greece and Great Britain expressed in unmistakable fashion their opinion of the whole mad business by summarily bringing to an end the Governments of Constantine and Lloyd George. Constantine was deposed and died in exile. Lloyd George, who was the real instigator of the adventure, having the good fortune to live in a civilized country, was merely forced into political obscurity, but the Greek ministers who were his dupes, and who had relied on the solemn assurance of the British premier that they would receive British support, died between a stone wall and the rifles of an execution-squad. As for the little Cretan, Venizelos, whose eloquence and personal magnetism had hypnotized the peacemakers at Paris into supporting his policy of practically unlimited Hellenic expansion at the expense of other peoples, he has seen his dream of a Greater Greece vanish in thin air and the prestige of his country go down in ruin. Had he been less avaricious, had he restrained his territorial greed, it is safe to assert that the Nationalist party would

never have gained the power it did, and that Greece, instead of Turkey, would to-day hold the balance of power in the Near East. It takes something more than eloquence and personal magnetism to make a statesman.

In November, 1922, began the negotiations between the Allies and the Turks at Lausanne. These continued, with a single interruption, until July of the following year, when they were concluded by the signing of a treaty which recognises Turkey as an absolutely independent nation, subject to no foreign influence or control of any name or nature, and recognises her sovereignty over all the territory from the borders of Mesopotamia and Syria to the Maritza River, from the Russo-Persian frontier to the Mediterranean. The signing of the Treaty of Lausanne constituted the first real step in bringing to the Near East a just and enduring peace.

CHAPTER V

ARMENIA: A LOST CAUSE

WHEN, on July 24, 1923, in the great hall of the University of Lausanne, the representatives of the Allies affixed their signatures to the treaty which ended the nine-year conflict with the Turks, they not only abandoned the plan for an independent Armenia as outlined at Versailles in 1919 and demarcated two years later by President Wilson, but they definitely abdicated their power to settle the long pending Armenian Question, which has now become a purely domestic problem of the Government at Angora. The legend "Armenia," which prematurely appeared on post-war maps of Western Asia, has lost its temporary geographic and political significance, having become once more merely a generical designation for those Turkish provinces in which the bulk of the Armenian people dwell.

But the Treaty of Lausanne did not end the Armenian Question *per se*. That can only be ended when the new Turkish Government has won the confidence of its million and a half Armenian subjects, and the respect of the world, by conclusive proof that it intends to deal fairly with them, and that the bad old days of oppression and cruelty and massacre are done with for good

and all. The sooner the Armenians realize that the Turks' determination to maintain Turkish rule over all the regions conceded to them by the Treaty of Lausanne is adamantine, and the sooner the Turks realize that the best chance of establishing a united, peaceful, and prosperous Turkey, free from outside interference, lies in gaining the trust, friendship, and co-operation of the Armenians, the better it will be for both peoples.

In discussing the causes, phases, and effects of the Armenian Question, I have not blinded myself to the probability that those who are prejudiced against the Turk for religious, political, or sentimental reasons will brand as attempted extenuations what are intended to be unbiased explanations. I can only repeat, however, what I have said before in these pages, that I hold no brief for the Turks. My sole desire is to give those who read this book a clearer comprehension of a most complicated and misunderstood question, and this they cannot hope to obtain without examining it from every angle.

Though the Armenian nation had its beginnings in the dim dawn of history, it is not, and probably never was, a large one. Accurate statistics are unobtainable, but it is estimated that the total number of Armenians in the world does not exceed three million, of whom about a million and a half are in Turkish Armenia, a million in Russian Armenia, and possibly a hundred and fifty thousand in Persian Armenia, the remainder being scattered throughout Europe, America, and Eastern Asia.

Greater Armenia, taking the term in its most ambitious sense, includes the eight Turkish vilayets of Erzerum, Mamuret-el-Aziz, Diarbekr, Bitlis, Van, Trebizond, Sivas, and Adana; the Syrian province of Aleppo; the present Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia, which comprises the government of Erivan, the southern part of the government of Tiflis, the south-western part of the government of Elizavetpol, and most of the province of Kars; and a portion of the western frontier districts of Persia. In its more generally accepted sense, however—the purview taken by President Wilson when he fixed the boundaries of the proposed Armenian state—Armenia comprises, in part or whole, the Turkish vilayets of Trebizond, Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, and Mamuret-el-Aziz—a highly mountainous, heavily forested region bounded on the north by the Black Sea, on the north-east by the Republic of Armenia, on the east by Persia, on the south of Kurdistan, and on the west by Anatolia.

Were the Armenians in a clear majority in any one of these five vilayets the scheme for creating an independent Armenia might possibly have succeeded. But that is nowhere the case. Even by adding to the five Turkish vilayets which have the most Armenians the Russian Republic of Armenia, the Armenians do not total more than a third of the entire population; while in Greater Armenia not more than one fifth of the inhabitants are Armenians. The problem is immensely complicated, moreover, by the warlike and savage character of the Kurds, who share a portion of these vilayets with the Armenians and who for the last

thousand years have so repeatedly attacked and massacred their Armenian neighbours that the once preponderant race has been worn down to a minority.

The fairest and most accurate résumé of Armenian character and characteristics that I know of is that by Major-General Sir Charles William Wilson, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., F.R.S., for many years director-general of military education, in the Encyclopædia Britannica:

In the recesses of Mount Taurus the peasants are tall, handsome, though somewhat sharp-featured, agile and brave. In Armenia and Asia Minor they are robust, thick-set, and coarse-featured, with straight black hair and large hooked noses. They are good cultivators of the soil, but are poor, superstitious, ignorant, and unambitious, and live in semi-subterranean houses as their ancestors did 800 years B.C. The townsmen, especially in the large towns, have more regular features—often of the Persian type. They are skilled artisans, bankers, and merchants, and are remarkable for their industry, their quick intelligence, their aptitude for business, and for that enterprising spirit which led their ancestors, in Roman times, to trade with Scythia, China, and India. The upper classes are polished and well educated, and many have occupied high positions in the public service in Turkey, Russia, Persia, and Egypt The Armenians are essentially an Oriental race, possessing, like the Jews, whom they resemble in their exclusiveness and widespread dispersion, a remarkable tenacity of race and a faculty of adaption to circumstances. They are frugal, sober, industrious, and intelligent, and their sturdiness of character has enabled them to preserve their nationality and religion under the sorest trials. They are strongly attached to old manners and customs but have also a real desire for progress which is full of promise. On the other hand.

they are greedy of gain, quarrelsome in small matters, self-seeking, and wanting in stability; and they are gifted with a tendency to exaggeration and a love of intrigue which has had an unfortunate influence on their history. They are deeply separated by religious differences, and their mutual jealousies, their inordinate vanity, their versatility, and their cosmopolitan character must always be an obstacle to the realization of the dreams of the nationalists. The want of courage and self-reliance, the deficiency in truth and honesty sometimes noted in connection with them, are doubtless due to long servitude under an unsympathetic government.

The Armenians are of the Aryan race. They have a language of their own, which belongs to the Indo-European family of tongues. They have a national church, the Armenian Church, whose origin goes back to perhaps the second century after Christ. For many centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian era they were ruled by kings of their own race, and it is the remembrance of their former independence which has provided them with a mighty incentive to free themselves from Turkish rule.

After the capture of Constantinople by Mohammed II in 1453, that monarch proceeded to organize his non-Moslem subjects into communities or *millets*, under their own ecclesiastical chiefs, usually known as patriarchs, who were recognised officials of the Imperial Government with the rank of vizier. To them was delegated absolute authority in civil and religious matters, as well as jurisdiction in criminal cases which did not come under the Moslem religious laws. Thus

the Armenian bishop of Brusa was appointed by the sultan as the first of that long line of Armenian patriarchs, who have been the spiritual and political heads of the Armenians in Turkey down to the present day. This *imperium in imperio* secured to the Armenians a recognised position before the law, the free enjoyment of their religion, the possession and administration of their churches, monasteries, and schools, the right to educate their children as they saw fit, in short, the right to manage their own affairs. It was a remarkable concession for an all-powerful Moslem ruler to make to a non-Moslem minority, the more so as throughout Europe religious intolerance was the order of the day. The *millet* system also encouraged a community life, which eventually gave birth to an intense longing for a national life. On the other hand, as Sir Charles William Wilson has pointed out, it demoralized and degraded the Armenian priesthood. The priests, as might have been expected, quickly became political leaders rather than spiritual guides, and sought advancement by bribery and intrigue. Education was neglected and discouraged, servility and treachery were developed, and in less than a century after the Conquest the Armenians had become depraved and degraded to an incredible extent. The Armenians, of course, always suffered to a certain extent from their social and political disabilities under Moslem rule, yet the undeniable fact remains that they lived for centuries in comparative security, and certainly with a very large measure of prosperity, as Ottoman subjects, many of them attaining to positions of great power under the sultans.

There are two points on which, because they have been so generally misunderstood, I wish to place particular emphasis: first, that the persecution of the Armenians is of comparatively recent origin; secondly, that it was *not* the result of Moslem religious intolerance and fanaticism. The refutation of the first of these two prevalent misconceptions is that the great Armenian massacres occurred during the last sixty years, while Armenians and Turks have been living together in Asia Minor for upward of six centuries. So little friction was there between the two races up to the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War that histories of Turkey written prior to that time do not even mention such a thing as an Armenian question. The second is refuted by the fact that the Turks are not, like their coreligionists, the Arabs, by nature a fanatical people. As a matter of fact, the history of the Ottoman Empire is less marred by religious intolerance and by massacres due to religious hatreds than the history of European states from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. It is well to remember that when the Crusaders were butchering their Moslem prisoners in Palestine, when the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition were in full swing, when Cromwell's troopers were massacring the Catholics of Ireland, when Protestants in France were being exterminated by orders of the French king, when Jews were being subjected to countless persecutions and barbarities in every European country, Moslems, Christians, and Jews were dwelling side by side, in perfect amity, in Asia Minor. Severe persecution and massacre of the Christian elements began only when Russia conquered

part of Armenia and coveted the rest, when the Balkan states became free and started irredentist propaganda, when French intervention in Syria and British intervention in Egypt threatened the disintegration of the empire. The animosity against Christian subject races was born of the suspicion that they were plotting with outsiders to detach from the empire the regions in which they lived.

For upward of two hundred years the enemy of which Turkey stood in mortal fear was Russia—an aggressive, predaceous, unscrupulous, land-hungry Russia with her greedy eyes fixed for ever on the straits and the city that crowned the hills beside them. (I have myself seen Russian maps of Turkey on which Constantinople was labelled Tsarigrad—the City of the Czar.) During all those years Turkey's every energy was bent on averting a Muscovite descent on the Bosphorus, on fending off the paws of the Bear. Russian war-ships hovered in the Black Sea. Russian armies constantly threatened the empire's eastern frontiers. Turkey was infested with Russian spies and political agents, eager to seize on any pretext that offered to stir up trouble between the two nations. And in eastern Turkey, occupying a strategic position of immense importance, dwelt some two million Armenian Christians, discontented, disloyal, and longing for independence. As Russia seemed the power most likely to help them to obtain it, the Armenians began intriguing with St. Petersburg, these intrigues being actively encouraged by the czar's Government, whose policy it was to foster the seditious and disintegrating elements in the sultan's eastern provinces

in order to provide a pretext for the conquest of Turkish territory. As a result, the Turks came to regard the Armenians as a treasonable and trouble-making element. There you have the beginnings of what came to be known in time as the Armenian Question.

Russia began to interest herself in the Armenians when she acquired Georgia in 1801, but no appreciable number of them became her subjects until a quarter of a century later, when Russia invaded Turkey and annexed the province of Kars. By the terms of the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829 the Christian population of European Turkey was placed under the protection of Russia, who made it a practice to grant Russian nationality to any Turkish Christians who cared to pay a brief visit to Russian territory.[1]

Though, during the next half-century, European opinion was constantly irritated by stories of the rapacity, injustice, and brutality which characterized the attitude of the sultan's officials toward his Christian subjects, when Abdul Hamid II came to the throne in 1876 the condition of the Armenians seems to have been appreciably better than it had ever been under Turkish rule. It was not until the close of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, which gave Bulgaria her independence, when the question of "reforms" was introduced by the powers in their dealings with the Sublime Porte, that the condition of the Armenians became an international question. By the Treaty of San Stefano Turkey engaged

[1] See "The New Map of Asia," by Herbert Adams Gibbons, and the articles on Armenia in the supplementary volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica by W. J. Childs, formerly of the British Naval Intelligence.

to Russia to carry out reforms "in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians." By the Treaty of Berlin a like engagement to the six signatory powers was substituted for that to Russia. This treaty encouraged the Armenians to look to the powers, and not to Russia, for protection. It was, I repeat, never religious fanaticism, nor racial hatred, but the policy of Russia in the Caucasus and the policy of all the great powers in the Balkans which first awakened and has since been the exciting cause of the animosity of the Turkish Moslems for the Armenians. In other words, the Armenians have been the unwitting victims of European imperialism. Who ever heard of Armenian massacres before the powers began to appropriate Turkish territory?

The ink on the Treaty of Berlin was scarcely dry before the St. Petersburg Government secretly instructed its consuls in Turkey to encourage the formation of Armenian revolutionary committees, the idea being to provoke an Armenian uprising, which, as Russia knew full well, would be repressed by the Turks with their customary ruthlessness. The excesses which would inevitably ensue would provide Russia with all the pretext she needed to occupy Armenia on the plea of protecting the Armenians, whereas her real motive was to form a vassal state composed of Russian, Turkish, and Persian Armenia. That thousands of Armenians would have been sacrificed did not worry the Muscovite statesmen. If "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the

church," then the blood of Armenia was long the seed of Russian imperialism in Western Asia.

The project, which was favoured by Loris-Melikov, then all-powerful in Russia, would probably have been put into execution had it not been for the assassination, in 1881, of Czar Alexander II. But shortly after his death a strong anti-Armenian policy was adopted by Russia. The schools in Russian Armenia were closed, the use of the Armenian language was discouraged, and attempts were made to Russify the Armenians and bring them within the pale of the Russian Church. Thus it will be seen that Russia, while stopping at nothing to incite the Turkish Armenians to revolt, was at the same time subjecting her own Armenian subjects to the greatest injustice and oppression. The insincerity of the St. Petersburg Government in its dealing with the Armenians is strikingly illustrated by the promise made to Sultan Abdul-Hamid that, if he would agree to abandon the plans for the construction of certain strategic railways in Turkish Armenia, Russia would reciprocate by forbidding the return to Turkey of the Armenians who had taken refuge in the Caucasus after the evolution of 1896.

After the abrupt change in Russian policy and the failure of the powers to secure reforms, the Armenian revolutionary leaders in the Caucasus, some of whom had been educated in Europe and the United States and had been deeply affected by the Nihilistic tendencies of the day, having seen the success of the Slav committees in producing disturbances in the Balkans, determined to employ the same methods in Turkey. Organizations

were formed in Tiflis and several European capitals for the dissemination of revolutionary literature, secret societies were formed, and an active propaganda was carried on in Turkish Armenia by agents who attempted to smuggle arms and explosives into the country and who represented the ordinary incidents of Turkish misrule as serious atrocities. But this crudely executed scheme to secure foreign intervention did not succeed, though the lurid stories related by the agitators aroused a great wave of sympathy in the United States and collections totalling many thousands of dollars were taken up for the cause in churches throughout the land.

Exasperated by their failure, the revolutionaries then proceeded to inaugurate a reign of terror in Turkey, in the course of which several attempts were made on the life of the sultan. On one of these occasions a bomb, placed by the conspirators beneath the seat of a carriage standing before the mosque in which the sultan was at prayer, blew a score or more innocent bystanders to bits but left the padishah unharmed. The agitators also succeeded in precipitating a series of futile outbursts—the most spectacular of which was the seizure by Armenians of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Constantinople—but they were all easily suppressed.

Retaliation promptly followed in the form of a long series of massacres of Armenians in the capital and in the provinces, instigated by Abdul Hamid, who by this time had developed an inordinate fear and hatred of the Armenians, and carried out by the dregs of the local Moslem populations, aided by Lazis, Circassians, and Kurds. A large majority of the Moslems disapproved

of the massacres and many Armenians were saved by Moslem friends, but the lower orders were excited by reports that the Armenians, supported by the European powers, were plotting the overthrow of the sultan, and their cupidity was aroused by the prospect of wiping out their heavy debts to Armenian merchants and money-lenders and of enriching themselves with Armenian goods.

Upon the fall of Abdul Hamid as a result of the Turkish Revolution of 1909, it was believed that a new day had dawned for the Armenians. They quickly discovered, however, that their lot had changed for the worse, for Enver and his colleagues of the Committee of Union and Progress proved to be reactionaries of the worst type, who, though they had overthrown Abdul Hamid, perpetuated the Hamidian régime under another name. Enver, shrewd, callous, utterly unscrupulous, was from the very beginning determined on the complete Turkification of Turkey as the first step in his ambitious scheme for founding a great Pan-Turanian Empire which should include all the Moslem lands lying between the Mediterranean and the western frontiers of China. Be it clearly understood, however, that Enver and the other young Turk leaders, with most of whom I was personally acquainted, were far from being religious bigots. The majority of them were, on the contrary, freemasons of the European brand, who were opposed to the interjection of religion in politics, and some of them were Jews. They were hard-headed, cold-blooded, unsentimental politicians, comparable to those of Tammany Hall in its worst days, who had secured control

of the country by a brilliant *coup d'état* and who did not propose to let any element in the population thwart their plans. They had no more intention of giving Turkey a liberal and progressive government than Lenin, Trotzky & Co. have of giving such a government to Russia.

It did not take the new clique long to realize that the Christian population, better educated than the Moslems and having more reason to appreciate the newly proclaimed régime of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, were the only elements upon which a politically regenerated Turkey could stand, nor that these elements, wealthy and influential, would demand that the promises made by the Committee should be carried out. They realized that the Armenians, animated by an intense spirit of nationalism and encouraged by the sympathy with which their aspirations were regarded abroad, would prove a stumbling-block in the execution of the plan for the Turkification of Turkey, and so they determined to eliminate this obstacle by wiping the Armenians out, cynically remarking that, if there were no Armenians, Turkey would no longer be irritated by an Armenian Question.

The honest, sincere Young Turks, including such men as Mustapha Kemal, Raouf Bey, later to become vice-president of the Grand National Assembly, and others, who had joined the movement because it promised to bring peace to their distracted country, were so few in number that they could not prevail against the reactionary element as personified by such men as Enver, Talaat, Djavid, Djemal, and the rest,

and so they broke with the Committee of Union and Progress, which was then free to pursue its policy of repression and persecution without opposition from within.

The Young Turk régime was inaugurated in 1909 by a butchery at Adana, when thousands of Armenians lost their lives. Though the origins of this massacre remain obscure, there can be no doubt that some form of official prompting lay behind them. The only question is whether the instigation came from the adherents of Abdul-Hamid in an attempt to discredit the Young Turk movement, or from the Young Turks themselves. Certain it is, however, that the diabolical scheme was encouraged, if not actually abetted, by the German military party, which saw in the energetic and ambitious Armenians, already highly successful in industry and finance, a menace to the scheme for bringing the whole of Turkey under German economic domination. The Young Turks, be it understood, were hand in glove with the militarists of Berlin, whose emissaries, in the guise of military advisers, instructors, consuls, traders, and the like, were working indefatigably throughout the sultan's dominions laying the foundations for the meditated *Drang nach Osten.* But it must not be assumed that the Armenians themselves were without blame for the Adana massacre. "After the first fraternal demonstration of the revolution they had," to quote Mr. W. J. Childs, a recognised authority, "adopted a manner toward their Moslem fellow-citizens provocative and unwise beyond belief. They had indulged in Armenian national processions, displaying

the flag of an independent Armenia; had publicly boasted that Cilicia itself was soon to become an independent Armenia; had insulted and beaten Moslems in the streets of Adana. To the fatal influence of these follies were added the economic facts that Armenian land-owners, already in possession of the richest areas of the Cilician plain, were rapidly increasing their holdings; and that the Armenian population prospered and multiplied while the Moslem population declined. The Moslems of Cilicia, indeed, were gloomily brooding over Armenian affronts to their patriotism and economic Armenian encroachments on their position as the dominant and ruling race. These matters combined formed a mass of highly inflammable material." As an attempt to justify this barbarous policy, the Turkish leaders claimed that, at a time when Turkey was straining every effort in the Gallipoli campaign, the Allies were instigating Armenian uprisings in Asia Minor, thereby threatening the Turks in the rear. But this excuse does not hold water, for no conceivable threat could have been offered to the security of the country by the Armenian women and children, of whom thousands perished. Though the estimates made by Armenians of the losses suffered by their people as a result of the Young Turks' policy tend to be excessive —and it is in the nature of things that they would be —if we place the loss of life directly and indirectly caused by massacre and deportation since 1914 as being in the neighbourhood of three quarters of a million, we will not be far from the truth, to which must be added the legitimate losses of war.

The declaration of war by the Allies was the signal for Enver and his associates on the Committee of Union and Progress, who were now in undisputed power in Turkey, to launch their cherished scheme for the complete Turkification of Asia Minor. Under Talaat Bey, the minister of the interior, the process was begun during the spring of 1915 in ruthless fashion. Greek elements of the population were deported in tens of thousands from the coastal regions where they had become unduly numerous and taken into the interior, many being killed. But Turkification, as I have said, was aimed primarily against the Armenians, who were to be exterminated. During 1915-16 organized massacres and deportations were carried out systematically, to the extent of almost uprooting the Armenian race from Asia Minor. Tens of thousands were slaughtered; hundreds of thousands were set marching for Syria and Mesopotamia, vast numbers of them perishing on the way from hardship, disease, starvation; those who escaped became homeless, hunted fugitives; from first to last, probably not far from half a million Armenians perished in Asia Minor out of a population of less than two millions.

Only in the Turkish provinces bordering on Transcaucasia did massacre and deportation fail. In these districts the Armenian inhabitants either succeeded in escaping into Russian territory or were saved by the advance of the Russian armies, which many of them joined. Though the majority of the Armenians in the Russian armies were employed on the various battlefronts in Europe—Mr. Childs estimates the total num-

ber at one hundred and sixty thousand, of whom only thirty thousand survived—a considerable contingent of Armenians was attached to the Russian forces engaged in the campaign against Turkey, and it was largely owing to their ardour, courage, and determination to obtain revenge that the Russians owed what success they had against the Turks. There is sound evidence to prove, however, that the methods employed by these Armenian volunteers were no less savage than those of their Turkish enemies. General Mayvesky, the Russian commander on the Caucasus front, in his book, "Armenian Massacres," which contains his reports to Russian G. H. Q., asserts that the Armenians massacred hundreds of thousands of the Turkish inhabitants of the eastern provinces. In 1916 a Russian column, largely composed of Armenians and other Christian volunteers, calling themselves the Army of Revenge, invaded Central Kurdistan, the atrocities committed by them during the destruction of Rawanduz upon Kurds who until then had known nothing of them being in every respect equal to anything attributed to Kurds in former massacres of Armenians. One can perfectly understand, and in a measure condone, these savage retaliations of a tormented people on their oppressors; but to assert, as some do, that the Armenians themselves have never been guilty of cruelties or massacres is to betray either a complete disregard of the truth or a profound ignorance of the facts. Though reliable figures are not obtainable and probably never will be, unbiased judges are of the opinion that, during the period 1914-22, as many Moslems were massacred in Asia Minor by Ar-

menians and Greeks as there were Christians massacred during the same interval by Moslems.

After many vicissitudes, the Russian campaign against Turkey was crowned with success in 1916 by the capture of Trebizond, Erzerum, and Van, the Muscovites thus completing the conquest of Armenia which they had begun many years before. But the Russian occupation was short-lived, for the following year, by the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Russian armies withdrew not only from Turkish Armenia but from Russian Armenia as well. The million or so Armenians of Transcaucasia, thus abandoned, saved themselves from the Turks by organizing a state of their own, which has been augmented by several hundred thousand refugees from Turkey until the Armenians now form about two thirds of the total population. This state—the Socialist Soviet Republic in Armenia—which is in area about double the size of New Jersey with half New Jersey's population, comprises the south-eastern frontier districts of Transcaucasia; its capital is Erivan. Though Moscow has permitted it to remain under a quasi-independent Soviet régime, its future is bound up with that of Russia, its inhabitants having become as Bolshevistic in their tendencies as any of the other Soviet groups in that broad land.

When the Great War ended in complete victory for the Allies, nothing was more confidently expected than that the Armenians of Turkey would be given their independence. The statesmen assembled at Versailles agreed in principle to an independent Armenia, it was

definitely provided for in the Treaty of Sèvres, and President Wilson actually delimited the frontiers of the proposed state, which was to include the greater parts of the vilayets of Trebizond and Erzerum and the whole of the vilayets of Van and Bitlis, with a broad outlet on the Black Sea.

But however admirable the decisions of the treaty-makers, they took Armenia little farther toward the actual possession of the territory awarded to her. The Allies might assign the territory by treaty; the feeble and unrepresentative Ottoman Government at Constantinople might, under Allied pressure, sign the treaty; and President Wilson might define the boundaries of the new state, but for the Armenians to gain possession was another matter. For the real government of Turkey, the Nationalist Government at Angora, had declared in the most unequivocal terms that it would surrender no territory in which the Moslems were in the majority, and that was undeniably the case in Armenia. The Allies were faced, therefore, with the alternative of accepting that decision with the best grace possible or of going to war.

That foreign powers cannot protect minorities by force in an independent or even a semi-independent country is a fact which was recognised years ago by Lord Salisbury, who, replying to criticisms for not having protected the Armenians, explained that no way had yet been devised whereby British battleships could traverse the Taurus. Foreign powers can only protect minorities in this way by conquering and permanently occupying every part of the country in which the

minorities are resident, a procedure which was obviously impracticable in the case of Asia Minor. So when the Allies, exhausted, war-weary, and on the verge of bankruptcy, baulked at military intervention, the sole hope of the Armenians lay in the United States accepting a mandate for Armenia, but this the American Senate declined, and, to my way of thinking, wisely.

The truth of the matter was that, though the Armenians possessed the sympathy of the world, their case was not an altogether sound one. America and the Allies had accepted President Wilson's principle of self-determination, but they frankly violated that principle when they decided that the Turkish Armenians should be permitted to organize an independent state. For, despite all the juggling that was done with ethnologic figures, the plain fact remained that in no vilayet of Asia Minor, even before the massacres and deportations, were the Armenians in a majority over the Moslems. The strongest argument for self-determination that the King-Crane Commission on Mandates could advance was that if the million Armenians estimated to have lost their lives in the massacres of 1894-96, 1908-09, and 1915-16 could be restored and brought into the land, the Armenians would form about one half the population. But, adopting this same naïve reasoning, if the Moslems who were killed by the Russians, Armenians, and Greeks could be restored, the Armenians would again be in a minority.

The Senate's refusal to accept a mandate for Armenia aroused much indignation among the friends of Armenia in the United States, and when, in 1922, the

Nationalists swept the Greek armies out of Asia Minor, the demands for American intervention to save the Christian minorities redoubled. President Harding and Secretary Hughes were bombarded with telegrams and letters from church congregations and religious organizations all over the United States demanding that America take instant action to save the Christians. Let us pause for a moment to see what such action would have entailed. In the first place it would have necessitated a declaration of war against Turkey, with whom we have never been at war. Our fleets could then have bombarded such of the Turkish coast towns as the Greeks had not left in ruins, but the only effect of such bombardments would have been to precipitate a massacre of those Armenians who were left in Turkey and to put an end to further American missionary effort in that country. To have effectively occupied Armenia would have required, so the commission of inquiry headed by General Harbord estimated, an expeditionary force of not less than two hundred and fifty thousand men, though, in view of the strength later developed by the Nationalist forces, this figure would probably have proved too small by half.[1] To transport an army of, say, half a million men, to a battle-line five thousand miles from our shores, and to maintain it in a savage and inhospitable region, utterly destitute of means of communication, for an indefinite period, would have taxed to the utmost the resources even of a nation as powerful as the United States. Moreover, an army of

[1] Marshal Foch estimated that a minimum of three hundred thousand men would be required.

such size could not have been raised by the volunteer method for employment in such a war, so that the Government would have been compelled to fall back on conscription, a recourse of which Americans approve only in great national emergencies. And, as the Allies knew full well, an invasion of Turkey by a foreign power might well result in bringing to the aid of the Turks millions of their coreligionists in other Moslem countries, thereby precipitating a conflict the outcome of which no one could foresee and which would cause any nation to hesitate. Though the vociferous demands made by friends of the Armenians for American intervention did great credit to their hearts, they betrayed an astonishing ignorance of what such intervention would have entailed.

As I said before, I believe that the American Senate showed great wisdom in declining to accept a mandate for Armenia, but that does not alter the fact that the Armenians have been shamefully betrayed by those nations in which they had put their trust and which had solemnly pledged them their independence. The United States has the excuse that it was not a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles, in which Armenia's independence was agreed upon, or to the Treaty of Sèvres, which reiterated it. But Britain, France, and Italy have no such extenuation to offer. As for Russia, there can be little doubt that, had she not been eliminated from the struggle by revolution, she would, sooner or later, have annexed Armenia to her own dominions, for the Muscovite attitude toward the Armenians was never anything save an insincere and predatory one.

The treatment accorded to Armenia by the Allies is a sorry commentary on international good faith.

As the Government at Angora has flatly refused to set aside any territory as a "national home" for the Armenians, and as no considerable number of them can hope to find refuge with their Sovietized brethren in Russian Armenia, whose land is poor and could not support a materially larger population, the Turkish Armenians must, therefore, take their choice between becoming homeless wanderers on the face of the earth, like the Jews of past generations, or remaining in Asia Minor under the guarantees which the Nationalists have agreed to give them.

By the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne the Turks have bound themselves to grant the non-Turkish minorities in their country (on condition of reciprocity for Turkish minorities elsewhere) the whole status, and nothing but the status, secured the minorities in defeated, or newly created, or enlarged states in Europe by the other treaties of peace. This means, if interpreted literally, that those Christians who continue to reside in Turkey will enjoy the same privileges, and be subject to the same restrictions and disabilities, as the Magyars who have come under Rumanian and Jugoslav rule, the Tyrolians who have become Italian subjects, and the Germans and Russians who have come under the sway of Poland.

If the present Nationalist leaders, humane, progressive, far-seeing men of the stamp of Mustapha Kemal and Ismet and Raouf and Adnan, remain in power at Angora, I am convinced that the Armenians

henceforward will be secure in Turkey, provided, of course, they will consent to abandon their irredentist agitations and give faithful allegiance to the new democracy. For the men who are at present in control of Turkish affairs stand for an entirely new order of things in Turkey, they strongly disapproved of the Armenian massacres (as was shown when they broke with the all-powerful Committee of Union and Progress), and they are keenly alive to the economic value to the young state of a body of industrious, intelligent, and talented Armenians. The greatest menace, in my judgment, to the future well-being of the Armenians lies in a return to power of the vicious and reactionary Young Turk clique, certain members of which are known to be lurking in the political background at Angora.[1] But, though anything may happen in Turkey, the return to power of this discredited and detested element, while a possibility, is by no means a probability.

I, for one, refuse to accept the prophecies of the professional anti-Turks and the political propagandists, the cynics and the calamity-howlers, who assert that the Turk can no more change his attitude toward the Armenians than the leopard can change its spots and that the two races can never live together in amity. On the contrary, I am convinced that if the Armenians will drop their demands for complete independence, which it is obviously impossible for Turkey to accede to; if their priests will cease meddling in political

[1] The arch-villain and reactionary leader, Enver Pasha, is reported to have died in battle in Bokhara, in Turkestan.

affairs; if the propagandists abroad will abandon their attempts to stir up further trouble, which are of no avail to a cause already lost and only serve to make more trying the position of the Armenians in Turkey, if they will set to work, as loyal Turkish citizens, to support and strengthen the new régime, and if the Turks, on their part, will adopt a conciliatory and unselfish attitude toward the Armenians, with a view to granting them a very large measure of self-government as soon as they are ready for it and conditions warrant it, it will set forward the hands of progress in the Near East by many years and there will no longer be an Armenian Question.

CHAPTER VI

THE HARVEST OF PANHELLENISM

All the troubles which have overwhelmed the Greeks of Turkey are directly traceable, in the final analysis, to two men—Eleutherios Venizelos and David Lloyd George. It was Venizelos's policy of Hellenic expansion at the expense of other peoples, and Lloyd George's policy of abetting such expansion in order to give England a strong vassal state in the Near East, that created the monster of Turkish Nationalism which finally destroyed them both. Had these two men, the eloquent little Cretan and the nimble-witted, equally eloquent little Welshman, been more moderate in their demands; had they not been encouraged by their amazing success at Versailles to give free rein to their imperialistic designs; had they contented themselves with the Greek territorial gains in Thrace and the Islands, with the vast British gains in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Africa; had they had the wisdom to refrain from stirring up a hornets' nest by leaving the Turk in undisputed possession of his Anatolian homelands, it is safe to assert that the Nationalists would never have achieved the popularity and power which enabled them to transform defeat into victory, the

Greek army would not have been annihilated, Greece would not have lost Eastern Thrace, hundreds of thousands of Anatolian Greeks would not now be homeless, and Anglo-Hellenic prestige in the Near East would not have been shaken to its foundations. Statesmen, like soldiers, are measured in the scale of their achievements, and, though Venizelos and Lloyd George were loudly proclaimed as among the greatest statesmen of their time, the series of disasters which have directly resulted from their policies leads one to question the popular estimate. It strikes me that in their case the American and European publics, hypnotized by an unrivalled propaganda and ready to acclaim as a hero any one who had a hand in ending the Great War, mistook eloquence for wisdom, and personal magnetism, combined with political agility, for statesmanship.

Sir William Ramsay, the foremost living authority on the populations of Asia Minor, has expressed the opinion that M. Venizelos, in placing his demands for Greek territorial expansion in Anatolia before the peace conference, had been misled by falsified statistics of population, the Panhellenic enthusiasts who drew them up having laid claim to every town where there was a small body of Greek residents. If this was true of Asia Minor, it was even truer of Thrace, many of the districts awarded to the Greeks being overwhelmingly Turkish or Bulgarian in population. Investigators who were sent out to Turkey by the conference to examine these claims saw the Greeks of the towns thronging in full numbers to greet them, but they did not see the much greater number of Turks who did not

come to welcome them. Aidin, he pointed out, had been called a Greek city, but there were only eight thousand Greeks in it out of a total population of thirty thousand, adding that it had been occupied by the Greek troops, who had left it a heap of ashes. Moreover, the rustic population in the fields was almost wholly Turkish, save in the immediate neighbourhood of Smyrna, Fokia, and Aiavali, while the mountain districts between the valleys were inhabited only by Turks. So, though the Greeks had claims which were deserving of careful consideration, great allowances should be made for exaggeration.

Just what are these Greeks of Asia for whom M. Venizelos appealed so effectively? In the first place, they are a people of a different character and different traditions from the Greeks of Europe. They are the descendants of the people of Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, which ceased to exist as an independent political entity in 1453, but who, despite having lived under Turkish rule for close on five hundred years, despite having adopted the Turkish language and Turkish customs, have retained not only the Greek religion but a profound love for the Hellenic motherland, many of them customarily referring to the King of the Hellenes as "our King Géorgios." The Greeks of Asia have been called by M. Venizelos "the purest portion of the Hellenic race, which has best preserved the ethnic type." That, in education and general culture they are far superior to the European Greeks, no one who is familiar with both peoples will deny. Seafarers by tradition, they take more kindly to maritime

pursuits than to agriculture, almost the whole of the shipping trade of Turkey having been in their hands, but when they till the soil they do it well. The upper classes, comprising lawyers, doctors, bankers, and business men, enjoyed a remarkable degree of prosperity, many of the Levantine Greeks being extremely rich men. Though their business ethics were not always the highest, they were not characterized by that fawning avariciousness which foreigners find so irritating in the Armenian. As a matter of fact, the Greeks were in a remarkable degree complementary to the Turks, each race having certain qualities which the other did not possess.[1]

Let it be clearly understood, now, that, prior to the Great War, the lot of the Turkish Greeks was not a hard one, even under Abdul Hamid's despotic rule—a fact which most of them realize now that it is too late. It is true that, like the other Christian communities, they were handicapped by certain political disabilities and restrictions, and that, like their Moslem fellow-subjects, they suffered from the general misrule which characterized the Ottoman régime. But, on the other hand, they were permitted to manage their own affairs under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch; they were, until very recent years, exempt from military service; and, generally speaking, they enjoyed a degree of prosperity which their Moslem neighbours were seldom able to attain. Between the Greeks and the Turks there was never the mutual contempt, hatred, and distrust which characterized the relations between

[1] See "The New Map of Asia," by Herbert Adams Gibbons.

the Turks and Armenians. Destitute of the latter's intense longing for independence and predilection for intrigue which so exasperated the Turks, the Greeks of Asia, generally quiet and well behaved, had not given the Turkish Government the trouble and anxiety which the Armenians had caused it, and had not, therefore, suffered from persecution and massacre.

When, armed with distorted ethnologic maps and inspired with a passionate desire to reconstitute the old Greek Empire, M. Venizelos appeared before the Council of Ten in December, 1918, he claimed that there were 1,700,000 "unredemeed" Greeks in Asia Minor, 365,000 in Constantinople and vicinity, 100,000 in the Dodecanese, and 235,000 in Cyprus, all of whom, he asserted, were eager to be reunited under Hellenic rule. In order, however, to give an independent Armenia outlets to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, he agreed to sacrifice the considerable Greek populations of the Pontus and Cilicia provided the Allies recognised Greece's claims to all the vilayets bordering on the Ægean Sea, with a substantial hinterland, and provided that Cyprus was restored to Greece by Great Britain and the Dodecanese by Italy. In other words, he demanded that Greece, in addition to receiving the whole of Thrace up to the Chatalja Lines, should be permitted to extend her rule over more than a quarter of Asia Minor, with nearly half its population.

France and Italy, alarmed by the prospect of seeing a Greater Greece established at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and of the Greek flag flying over regions which they had determined to bring within their own

spheres of influence, stubbornly opposed granting these excessive demands, but when, in the spring of 1919, the rumble of the Nationalist storm that was brewing in Anatolia reached the ears of the conferees in Paris, Venizelos, strongly supported by Lloyd George, was given permission to land a Greek army at Smyrna.[1] It was an unwise and, as it proved, a disastrous decision, as the Allied statesmen would have realized had they taken the trouble to recall the behaviour of Greek troops when they had occupied other Moslem lands—Crete, Macedonia, Albania, for example.

What followed has been graphically described by Mr. Clair Price in "Current History":

> At 9 p.m. on May 14, 1919, Admiral Sir Somerset Gough-Calthorpe, British High Commissioner at Constantinople, notified the Turkish military commander at Smyrna that the city would be occupied at 7 a.m. At 11 p.m. Admiral Calthorpe added the information that the occupation would be effected by Greek forces. At 7 a.m. the Turkish garrison had laid down its arms and withdrawn to its barracks, and Greek transports were entering the harbour. By 11 a.m. British forces had occupied the telegraph offices and the Greeks had disembarked. From the quay they marched to the Turkish barracks and raked its crowded interior with machine guns, killing some 300 and wounding 600 Turks. At the Turkish barracks and elsewhere, in Smyrna City and deep into the hinterland, the killing

[1] Though the Greek army was sent to Anatolia ostensibly to check the Turkish Nationalists, the real reason for the move, as I have stated elsewhere, was to forestall an Italian occupation. When England and France permitted Greek forces to occupy Smyrna they broke their pledges to Italy, to which they had promised the Smyrna region as part of her price for entering the war.

continued for days and the resentment in Constantinople became so intense that the Allied High Commissioners were compelled to despatch an Interallied Commission of Inquiry to Smyrna, whose report, when completed, was suppressed.

Thus the Allies inaugurated the promised era of peace and justice in Asia Minor!

Just as the volley fired by British soldiers on the village green at Lexington was the knell of Britain's empire in North America, so the volley fired by Greek troops in Smyrna sounded the knell of the Hellenic dreams of empire in Asia. Its echoes reverberated up and down the land. In every Turkish village from the shores of the Ægean to the slopes of Ararat the people assembled in their mosques to call down the vengeance of Allah on the butchers, to pass resolutions of protest, and to take measures for resistance and reprisal. Those who had been opposed to or half-hearted in their support of the Nationalist movement flocked by the thousands to Mustapha Kemal's standard. Almost over night the national discouragement turned into an iron-hard determination.

I have told, in a preceding chapter, the story of the Greek campaign in 1919-22 in Anatolia, and it needs no repetition here. Though I made repeated journeys in Turkey during the period of the Greek occupation, and am intimately familiar with what occurred there, I prefer, lest I be charged with bias, to tell the story in the words of others.

Here is the evidence of Professor Arnold J. Toynbee,

professor of Byzantine and modern Greek literature and history in the University of London, as printed in the London "Times" of April 6, 1922:

On February 14, 1922, Greek soldiers went to the towns of Sekisachack, Karatepe, and Efejieh, in the Province of Smyrna, and ordered the population, including the women and children, to assemble in the mosques to hear the new proclamation of the Greek Government. Then the Greek soldiers surrounded the building, nailed the doors, and by using petroleum, burned the mosques, in which the innocent men, women and children perished. In these three towns there is not a single home or building left untouched or undestroyed.

In the London "Daily Mail" of September 2, 1922, was published further evidence from Professor Toynbee, who is generally recognised as one of the best informed and most fair-minded authorities on the Near Eastern Question:

I was an eye-witness last year to Greek atrocities against the Turks. The district where they occurred was a fertile and formerly prosperous peninsula on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmora. Incidentally, it was a part of the neutral zone set up by the Treaty of Sèvres, but the Allies had not only allowed but invited a Greek army to occupy it. The extermination was carried out partly by bands of local Greek irregulars with the countenance and collusion of the Greek military authorities, partly by the Greek regular troops themselves. I was coasting round in an Ottoman Red Crescent steamer which was evacuating the survivors.

On September 12 the same paper reproduced a

despatch from the "Chicago Tribune" correspondent at Smyrna in which the following statement appeared:

The Greek army has burned all the villages and towns on its march and converted Asia Minor into a ruin. . . . The Greeks have massacred the defenceless Turks everywhere.

M. Franklin-Bouillon, who was sent by the Allies on a mission to Mustapha Kemal at Angora, when interviewed on September 3 by a number of foreign correspondents, made this statement:

I have seen terrible and frightful things at Magnesia, a town near Smyrna. This town, hitherto so prosperous, had, before the Greek invasion, 50,000 inhabitants and 11,000 houses, of which 10,000 have been burned by the Greeks. The Greek commander himself directed this horrible operation from the balcony of the building where he had his headquarters. As he gave his incendiary troops orders he calmly lighted a cigarette. I ask the American journalists to use every effort to let the civilized Anglo-Saxon world know of these atrocities committed by the Greeks. We do not want Thrace also to become under Greek domination a ruined and ravaged desert. In Anatolia the Greeks have destroyed, devastated, and exterminated everything and everybody.

The International Red Cross workers, who visited Asia Minor after it had been evacuated by the Greeks, in their report published in this country said:

Involuntarily our thoughts were taken back to Pompeii and Messina, but while the annihilation of those

cities was due to natural causes, the destruction of the villages of Anatolia, situated at considerable distances from the front, has been, to say the least, methodically perpetrated by Greeks in the heart of the twentieth century.

In commenting on the behaviour of the Greek troops, Mr. William T. Ellis, the well known author and correspondent, said in "The Saturday Evening Post":

They wrote their entrance in red letters. On the day they landed—all this is confirmed by an official inter-allied report of investigation—they massacred unarmed men, women, and children. The worst that the Turks had ever done to the Christians was matched by the conduct of the Greeks when their troops entered Asia Minor.

The responsibility for the crowning horror of the Greek invasion, the destruction of Smyrna, has not been, and probably never will be, definitely determined. The American consul-general, Mr. George Horton, whose wife is a Greek, who was for many years stationed at Athens, and who, therefore, is naturally pro-Greek in his sympathies, lays the blame upon the Turks. On the other hand the British consul-general, Mr. H. Lamb, reported to his Government that he had reason to believe that the Greeks in concert with Armenians had burned the city. This view was confirmed by the correspondent of the "Petit Parisien" in a despatch sent to his paper on September 20.

It is my personal opinion that Smyrna was probably burned by the Greeks, or by the Greeks and Armenians,

in order to prevent its falling into the hands of the advancing Turks; and that the massacre of the Christians which followed was perpetrated by the lower orders of the Turkish population, the scum of the bazaars, abetted in some instances, no doubt, by the Turkish troops (who appear on the whole, however, to have been under excellent discipline) in retaliation for the atrocities committed by the Greeks in the interior and for sporadic attacks by Armenians on the occupying forces. This view is borne out by the evidence of an eye-witness, Mr. Oran Raber, an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, who testifies that "as the Turkish army came silently and steadily down the street . . . an Armenian concealed among the crowds about fifty yards from where we stood stepped forward and threw a bomb at the head of the troops."

The most illuminating account of the tragic episode that I have seen, however, was contained in a letter from Mr. Leonard S. Whittall, one of the leading British residents of Smyrna, which appeared in "The New Statesman" of January 20, 1923. The Whittalls, I might add, occupy much the same position in the mercantile world of the Levant that the Wanamakers do in New York and Philadelphia.

Might I point out, as a refugee myself [writes Mr. Whittall] that the town [Smyrna] was not thoroughly sacked prior to the fire. A certain amount of sporadic looting was undoubtedly indulged in, but nothing in the nature of a complete sack of the town occurred. Further, it has now been established by the French Commission of Inquiry that the town was fired by

Greeks and Armenians. It is not likely that the Turks would destroy a town which they had every hope and every reason to believe would become their own. Their acts and policy heretofore have not shown them to be as suicidal and foolish as to destroy wantonly that which they had been fighting and suffering to secure ever since 1919—Smyrna and Constantinople. . . .

Unlike your correspondent, I was in Smyrna at the time of the Turkish entry. The advance guards of cavalry entered the outskirts of the town on Saturday evening, September 9, 1922, and the town itself was completely invested on the following day. The wholesale slaughter did not commence until Sunday, September 11. What occurred was undoubtedly dreadful and, although no right-minded man can possibly countenance massacres, yet a thoughtful individual may see extenuating circumstances which would, if not palliate the offence, at any rate explain the cause of the brutal passions aroused. . . .

Perhaps your correspondent is ignorant of the massacres by which the Greeks inaugurated their landing in Smyrna on May 15, 1919. Possibly he has not heard of the appalling incidents and wholesale massacres which occurred in Aidin and Pergamos, or, indeed, of the tyranny and outrage to which the Moslems had to submit ever since May, 1919, under the "sublime civilization of Hellenism." In their last retreat from Añum Karahissar, the Greek army wreaked its vengeance on the Moslem inhabitants. Details of what occurred have been described to me by members of the retreating army. I will not horrify your readers by reproducing these descriptions of barbarities unnamable. What I do wish to point out, however, is that it is not surprising that the pursuing Turkish army, fresh from these horrors, took vengeance in its turn, upon its arrival in Smyrna, on the inhabitants who were known not only to have supported the Greek Army of Occu-

pation, but also to have participated in the shameful incidents that inaugurated its landing.

And finally, that the record may be complete, permit me to quote from another article by Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, internationally recognised as one of the foremost living authorities on the question of atrocities in the Near East, which appeared in the July, 1923, issue of "Current History":

When one touches upon the responsibility for the Smyrna catastrophe, it is best to speak with caution, for weighty witnesses differ. I have personally discussed it with two Consular officers, belonging to powers of the first rank and themselves men of undoubted intelligence and honour, of whom one laid the chief blame on the Turks, and the other on the Greeks and Armenians. My final conclusion, however, which I base on a combination of evidence, is that in Smyrna City (as opposed to Smyrna Province) the Armenians and the Turks share the blame while the Greeks are probably innocent. After the Turkish occupation, which was accomplished without bloodshed, a secret Armenian organization (promoted not by the local Armenian community but by embittered exiles from Cilicia) started to bomb Turkish patrols in the Armenian quarter. House to house fighting ensued: houses were set on fire—it is uncertain by which party; and when once the fire had started, Turkish soldiers and civilians began to kill and plunder. That, in my belief, is the most probable reconstruction of events which occurred amid such panic and confusion that absolute certainty may be unattainable. . . .

But lest the Greeks should make the burning of Smyrna (as, indeed, they are making it) an occasion for propaganda, the Western visitor to Smyrna would

be well advised not to confine his observation to the city, but to travel up the French or British Railway into the interior, or else to come down to the West coast, as I did, from Angora via Afium Karahissar along the line of the Greeks' retreat in their final debacle. . . .

Karahissar itself is little damaged, for the Greeks had no time to carry out their plans, but between Karahissar and Smyrna they systematically devastated all the towns and the more accessible villages. . . . At Ushag I talked with the French station master, who had been on the spot at the moment of the Greek evacuation. He described the deliberateness of the incendiarism and the killing, and the town itself told its own tale. Every fourth or fifth house seemed to have been fired, and while in some cases the flames had been mastered quickly, in others whole blocks had been destroyed before the fire was stayed. Alashehr was far worse than Ushag. In this city of perhaps 35,000 inhabitants, which I had seen intact two years before, hardly a house remained standing. I was told that Kassaba was as bad. . . . Manysa, the last big town before Smyrna, I found half destroyed, like Ushag. Eskishehr, the railway junction between Angora, Karahissar and Constantinople, has been more fortunate. About three-quarters of it have escaped destruction. But the only city in the Greek zone of occupation that has come out unscathed is Brusa, and that is thanks to a party of French officers, who were hastily despatched there, immediately after the Greek occupation, from Constantinople.

Such were the soldiers who professed to be marching in the cause of Christianity and civilization. Such was the army which was championed by our newspapers, whose success was prayed for in our churches. Such

was the Government which was to give a reign of peace and justice, of happiness and prosperity, to the peoples of Turkey. Small wonder that one observer was moved to remark cynically that "the Turks are the only Christians in the Near East."

One of the first acts of the Nationalist Government after the Greek debacle was to insist on the expulsion of all Greeks dwelling in Anatolia, though this arbitrary decree was somewhat modified by the Nationalists' consenting to an exchange of populations, the Greeks in Turkey returning to Greece and the Turks in Greece returning to Anatolia. For the Government at Angora not only recognised the impossibility of protecting the Anatolian Greeks, should they be permitted to return to their homes, from the vengeance of their Turkish neighbours, but it realized that there could be no hope of peace for the new Turkish state as long as a large, seditious, and vindictive element remained within its borders. Had the Anatolian Greeks restrained their insensate hatred of the Turks—a hatred which, as I have shown, did not have the same justification as that of the Armenians; had they refrained from burning and looting and raping and killing, it is a fair assumption that they would have been permitted to remain in Turkey. But their merciless ferocity toward a people whom they made the mistake of believing beaten and helpless proved their own undoing. After their behaviour in Anatolia it was too much to expect that they would be permitted to remain unmolested among the people whom they had treated so shamefully. One might better expect the inhabitants of France's devas-

tated regions to permit the Germans who caused the devastation to return and settle in them, for the behaviour of the Germans in France was humane compared with the behaviour of the Greeks in Asia Minor.

Though the proposal to exchange the Greek minorities in Turkey for the Moslem minorities in Greece created a world-wide sensation, condemnation of the project being particularly outspoken in the United States, it might be pointed out that it was not a new one and that it did not originate with the Turks. In 1914, immediately after the Second Balkan War, M. Venizelos, then premier of Greece, made the same proposal to the Turkish Government. The negotiations progressed to the point where committees were appointed for the appraisal of the properties of those who were to be exchanged, but the outbreak of the World War interrupted the discussions.

It may be a little disconcerting to those Americans who protested so violently against the exchange of populations to learn that the initiative for this "inhuman" and "barbaric" scheme came not from the Turks but from the League of Nations. Shortly after the collapse of the Greek army, Dr. Fridtjof Nansen was sent by the League to Turkey to report on the feasibility of thus solving the tangled question. As military operations were not yet over, he was unable to proceed to Angora, and so he negotiated with Hamid Bey, the representative of the Grand National Assembly in Constantinople. Dr. Nansen made three proposals to the Turkish Government: (1) the exchange of the Greeks in Asia Minor for the Moslems of Greece; (2)

the exclusion of the Constantinopolitan Greeks from this exchange; (3) a provision that the exchange should be voluntary and should begin immediately without waiting for the conclusion of peace. The negotiations began on November 1, 1922, but when the Near East Peace Conference opened on November 20 the discussions were transferred to Lausanne, Dr. Nansen's proposals eventually being adopted by both parties with the full approval of the League of Nations, this solution being considered the best means for securing permanent peace in the Near East.

Whether, from the point of view of Turkey's economic interests, the expulsion of the Greeks is a wise move, is open to question. That the loss of a million alert, intelligent, industrious citizens must prove a serious handicap to the young state, few will attempt to deny, but to assert that without the Greeks there can be no economic future for a country as rich in natural resources as Turkey, with an honest and progressive government, with an industrious and homogeneous population, and with foreign capital coming in, is to reveal a pessimism which is quite unwarranted by the facts. But if they must choose between the two evils, so the Turkish leaders assert, then they prefer industrial stagnation to internal chaos. And I, for one, do not blame them.

Viewed in its broader aspect, the most discouraging feature of the Greco-Turk imbroglio, so it seems to me, has been the intolerance and prejudice displayed by the civilized peoples of the West, who, ever ready to excoriate the Turk—and for much that he has done he

deserves to be excoriated—have uttered no word in condemnation of the Greeks. Venizelos, who is acclaimed as standing for all that is noblest in Hellenism, is not on record as having once expressed regret for the unspeakable conduct of the army which he himself sent to subdue the Unspeakable Turk, nor were the atrocities perpetuated by the Greek soldiery in Asia Minor repudiated by King Constantine's Government, or by any of the Hellenic statesmen in other countries. Neither have I heard of one editor, one single clergyman, who has had the moral courage to pillory the Greeks as the Turks have been pilloried, and to admit that they have shamed Christianity, betrayed the great principle for which the Allies fought, and put a blot on our boasted Western civilization. Until we of the West can bring ourselves to view the affairs of the East through glasses uncoloured by sentiment, undistorted by intolerance or prejudice, until we can achieve a rugged and impartial attitude of mind which will express itself in outspoken condemnation of those whose deeds deserve to be condemned, and in unfailing commendation of those who are worthy to be commended, irrespective of race or creed or sentimental considerations, the less we talk about standing for the Square Deal in international affairs the better.

CHAPTER VII

THE DAWN OF DECENCY

THE importance of the New Turkey does not lie so much in its size—though in area it is considerably larger than pre-war Germany and has a population of some fourteen and a half millions—but in the immense significance of its geographic position. Look at the map and you will see that it forms a bridge, a thousand miles long and five hundred miles wide, between industrial Europe and the teeming markets of Hither Asia. Across it, as the Pan-Germans realized when they conceived the Baghdad Railway, lies the shortest and, indeed, the only practicable land route to India. And the two vital links in that route—the section of the Orient Railway between the Bulgarian frontier and Constantinople and the whole of the Anatolian Railway—are again in Turkish hands.

But that is not all, or nearly all, for beneath the Turkish bridge, as it were, flows the Bosphorus, a swift, salt river, so deep that ships cannot anchor in it, which is the only sea route to the cities of the Black Sea littoral and Russia's only outlet to the Warm Water. The Allies claim that, by their establishment of a demilitarized zone along the shores of the narrow

waterway which separates European from Asiatic Turkey, they have insured the freedom of the straits, but, as a matter of fact, the phrase now has little meaning. There has never been anything but freedom for commerce and peaceful shipping, and that freedom will continue whatever nation or group of nations is in control of the lands on either side. But if freedom means the opening of the straits to ships of war, the Turks, provided with aircraft, heavy artillery, mines, and torpedoes, could close them overnight. A single torpedo discharged from the dilapidated buildings which line the Bosphorus could send the mightiest battleship ever built to the bottom.

Thus it will be seen that the Turks control both the land and the sea entrances to north-western Asia. "Theirs are the gates to open and theirs the gates to shut." In estimating the Turkish situation, keep that fact prominently in mind.

Nor is it a weak and vulnerable nation of negligible military strength which holds this bridge-land between East and West. For, as the London "Nation"[1] points out, the Turkish army finds itself, for the first time in two hundred and forty years, without any other local counterweight. Military power is a relative quality, and it is a sober fact, not a rhetorical figure, that the relative military power of Turkey is greater at this moment than it has ever been since the second siege of

[1] See the articles in the London "Nation" for September, 1922; "The English Review" for October, 1922; "The Forum" for February, 1923; "Current History" for February and December, 1923; "The Contemporary Review" for March, 1923; and "The Fortnightly Review" for December, 1922, all of which have been of aid in preparing this chapter.

Vienna in 1683. The mightier military powers of the Hapsburg and Romanoff monarchies, which overshadowed Turkey and held her paralyzed from that memorable date until the outbreak of the Great War, have both vanished like smoke; Greece has been disposed of; Bulgaria, which, if treated justly by the Allies, might have formed an effective counterpoise to the Turk, looks sullenly on; Jugoslavia and Rumania are preoccupied with troubles of their own; and the Western powers, as shown by their attitude at Lausanne, have no inclination to embark on a long and costly struggle in the interior of Asia Minor against a united and warlike people who would be fighting on their home grounds.

Not only has the external military pressure, which for several centuries was the Turk's most acute sensation, at last been removed, but he has likewise been relieved of the internal ulcers which so long sapped his vitality—Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and the provinces in Arabia. These regions, which are not Turkish, which were always disaffected, and which long bled him of men and gold, are now bleeding their mandatories, France and England. The steadily mounting cost of holding Syria is causing France grave concern, particularly as she sees no prospect of getting anything save trouble in return for her expenditures; and the British Government is finding it increasingly difficult to justify to the British taxpayer the huge subsidies which it is paying to the Arab sheikhs to keep them quiet, while the public demand for the evacuation of Mesopotamia daily grows more insistent.

Thus the struggling and vulnerable Ottoman Empire, weakened by its remote, disloyal, and unprofitable provinces, has been cut down and consolidated into a compact Turkish national state, which retains all the richest provinces and possesses a large Turkish majority, and an overwhelming Moslem majority, in its population—a majority which has achieved and is determined to maintain its absolute independence; which has fought and, if necessary, will continue to fight for the maintenance of Turkish sovereignty instead of conspiring against it, as the Balkan Christians, the Anatolian Greeks, the Armenians, and the Arabs used to do.

As the result of one of those unexpected developments which ever teach thoughtful men the vanity of historical prescience and prophecy, the Allies, which intended to weaken Turkey, to make her helpless, have only succeeded in making her stronger than she has been for centuries and at the same time have weakened themselves. The British Empire, for example, which before the war could snap its fingers at Turkish military power from behind the formidable physical barriers provided by the sand deserts of north-east Egypt and the mountain ranges which form India's north-west frontier, is now, with a ridiculously inadequate force, occupying Mesopotamia, where the Turks can attack her, if they choose, with all the advantage on their side. Mosul could not be held should the Turks decide to take it, and the same is probably true of Baghdad. And it would need but little encouragement from the Turks to induce the Arabs to invade Palestine, where seventy

thousand Jews are attempting to impose their rule on seven hundred thousand Moslems. France is in even worse case in Syria, for a Turkish descent from the north, coupled with an Arab invasion from the East, could sweep that region clear of the French from Mount Ansarieh down to the hills of Samaria. The truth of the matter is that the Allies, in their insatiable greed for land, have, to put it inelegantly, bitten off more than they can chew.

If the American people had taken the trouble to familiarize themselves with the physical configuration of Asiatic Turkey, they would have long since realized why the Allies accepted humiliation and a loss of prestige rather than risk a campaign against the Turks; why the Greek invasion of Asia Minor was doomed to disaster from the outset; why military men smile wearily when they hear editors and preachers and armchair experts advocate "wiping Turkey off the map." For, when all is said and done, Asiatic Turkey is virtually invulnerable to successful invasion. Few countries in the world possess such remarkable natural defences. Between her and Russia rises, like a mighty wall, the Transcaucasian range; to the west are the impassable mountains of Kurdistan; and, effectually barring an inroad from the south, runs the rocky rampart of the Taurus. Within this semicircular mountain barrier rises the high plateau of Anatolia, still further guarded by the vast salt desert to the south of Angora and by the great unnamed range which shuts it off from the Black Sea. In this rough, inaccessible region, where communications are intensely difficult,

but where, thanks to a fertile soil and a not unfavourable climate, life may be maintained by agricultural pursuits, whose inhabitants are animated by that rugged and indomitable spirit which has carried Turkey through many a disastrous day, the Turk can always find a refuge from which he can successfully defy the invader. The potential strength of an embattled Turkey may be gauged from the fact that during the Great War nearly two million seven hundred thousand men were recruited for military service, of which approximately six hundred and fifty thousand were combat-troops. Thus the military prospects of the Turks, should they again be forced into a war with a first-class power, would be by no means as desperate as at first sight might appear. To talk of a naval blockade of Turkey is, of course, the veriest nonsense. Granting that the Dardanelles might eventually be forced, and that Constantinople would fall, how, pray, could even the combined navies of the world effectively blockade a country which has a land frontier of more than a thousand miles, whose neighbours to the east and south are bound to her by the ties of religion, and which has at her back door the inexhaustible resources of Russia and Middle Asia? That Anatolian Turkey is a hard nut to crack has long been recognised by strategists, though how hard has not been realized until recently.

Because the Germans did not succeed in precipitating the long-predicted *Jehad*, or Holy War, it has become the fashion to ridicule, or at least to minimize, the likelihood of other Moslem peoples' coming to the aid of Turkey in the event of war. But, given certain

conditions, the possibility is by no means as remote as many complacently assert. It was in a very large measure her fear of the wrath of Islam which deterred Great Britain from lending active military assistance to the Greeks, and it was the rumble of resentment from her millions of Moslem subjects in North Africa which caused France hastily to make peace with the Turkish Nationalists. Think not that the menace of a militant Islam exists only in the imaginations of the alarmists.

How Great Britain managed to wage a war against Turkey, which has seventy-five million coreligionists in India, and even to enlist Indian aid in the actual fighting in the West, is one of the marvels of modern diplomacy. She accomplished it by making promises which she has failed to keep. To allay the fears of the British Indians that the war would be waged on other than purely secular grounds, the British cabinet ministers made repeated and explicit pledges, the most important being on January 5, 1918, when Lloyd George declared that the Allies were not fighting "to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race." How the Allies kept this promise was shown by the Treaty of Sèvres. Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor were handed over to Greece; the British occupied Constantinople; France received Cilicia, which is an essentially Turkish region; and some of the holiest places in the Moslem world, including Jerusalem, Kerbela, and Nedjaf, passed under the rule of Great Britain. The Moslem reaction in India

was both rapid and alarming, resulting, as it did, in an alliance between the leaders of the Mohammedan faction, the 'Ali brothers, and the Hindu patriot, Mahatma Gandhi. So acute did the situation in India become that in the spring of 1922 the viceroy, Lord Reading, sent a message to the secretary of state for India, Edwin S. Montagu, declaring that the support which the Turkish cause was receiving throughout all India and the intensity of Indian resentment over the terms of the Sèvres Treaty made its immediate revision imperative. In a speech in the House of Commons Mr. Montagu said: "Whether you like it or not, whether you agree with the Mohammedans in India or not, the most dispassionate observer must give testimony to the fact that our rupture with Turkey, following the unprovoked entry of Turkey into the war, and the continued hostilities between Greece and Turkey, are profoundly affecting the peace of India." Though Lloyd George promptly demanded Mr. Montagu's portfolio, even more urgent warnings of the storm which was brewing in the Moslem East began pouring into Downing Street from such men as General Harington, the British commander-in-chief at Constantinople, Major-General Sir Charles Townshend, who had commanded the British force which surrendered at Kut-el-Amara, and others who, as the result of years spent in Moslem lands, were fully alive to the peril of the situation. To the Quai d'Orsay came similar warnings from the French officials in North Africa, which France lost no time in obeying by withdrawing her troops from Cilicia and the Dardanelles and by

despatching a representative, M. Franklin-Bouillon, to Angora to effect an agreement with the Nationalists. But the Lloyd George Government stubbornly shut its eyes to the storm-signals—and went on the rocks.

This brings us to a consideration of the religious factor in the New Turkey. We had, when the war began in 1914, a theocratic Ottoman Empire, the head of which, as sultan of Turkey, exercised temporal sovereignty over some twenty million Ottoman subjects, but who was at the same time, as caliph of Islam, the spiritual head of more than two hundred million Mohammedans. The Caliphate has been an appanage of the Turkish sultans for upward of four hundred years, a fact which on more than one occasion has saved Turkey from complete disaster, for a Western power which stood in no awe of the sultan of Turkey might well hesitate to affront the supreme head of the Moslem world. It was this dual position occupied by the Turkish ruler which always lent profound significance to events in Turkey, which, had they occurred in any other country, would have possessed only a local meaning; and it was in the hope of weakening Turkey, and of splitting the Islamic world, that England supported the claims of King Hussein of the Hedjaz to the Caliphate.

But, though the Turks are devout Moslems and always will be, the Mohammedan faith does not play the same part in their lives that it does in those of, say, the Arabs. The Nationalist leaders, who are far from being religious bigots, early realized that, if the new state was to endure, it could not be based on the Moslem

religion alone, which they showed when, by an act of the Grand National Assembly, they abolished the sultanate, forced the abdication of the incumbent, Mohammed VI, the last of the Turkish sultans, and elected a new caliph, who has no temporal power whatsoever. There is, then, no longer a sultan of Turkey, any more than there is a czar of Russia or an emperor of Austria.

This separation of church and state displayed a courage on the part of the Nationalist leaders which only those can appreciate who understand how closely interwoven in the past have been the relations of the old Ottoman Empire with Islam. It was freely predicted that this action spelled the end of Turkey's leadership in the Islamic world, but here again the prophets were wrong, for, though a few Arabs transferred their spiritual allegiance to Hussein, whom the British had attempted to set up as a rival caliph in Mecca, the Moslems of India and Africa, having recovered from their initial astonishment, acquiesced in the assertion that the Caliphate belonged to the Turks, and that, whether or not the Turk was justified in stripping it of temporal power, whosoever he chose as caliph must be accepted as the true leader of Islam. For the first time in history, then, we have a Turkish Government which is based on nationalism instead of religion. The Nationalists have retained the institution of the Caliphate, it is true, but they have done so for political purposes, in order to retain the control of the Moslem world. But, though the Turk will not hesitate to avail himself of the immense potential power which his control of the Caliphate confers upon him, it should

be realized that religion plays but a small part in his new scheme of government, and that, despite all that has been said to the contrary, Nationalist Turkey does not represent a fanatical Islam.[1]

Now let us pause for a moment to examine the unique political structure which has been erected at Angora, for it is one of the most novel and interesting experiments in government ever attempted. Its peculiarity is that it is neither a republic nor a monarchy; indeed, it does not resemble any other existing form of government. Perhaps "absolute democracy" would best describe it. According to the new Turkish constitution, all the power of the state is vested in the Grand National Assembly, the members of which are directly elected by the people, all persons twenty years of age, who are residents of Turkey and are Turkish citizens, having the right to vote. There are no legislative, executive, and judicial branches, as in most Western democracies, the National Assembly being all three in one. As a result of the concentration of all the powers of the state in a single body, there is no cabinet in Angora in the generally accepted sense of the word. The Assembly has, however, deputed its executive powers to a body of commissioners, composed of the heads of the various administrative departments, forming what may be called, for want of a better term, a cabinet, though they might be more accurately compared to an executive committee appointed by the board of directors of a great corporation. This executive committee merely

[1] For a wider discussion of this phase of the Turkish question see Mr. Clair Price's article in "Current History" for December, 1922.

carries out the domestic and foreign policies of the Government, which are determined not by its members but by the Grand National Assembly itself. Neither is there a sovereign, monarch, or ruler of any name, form, or nature whatsoever. Consequently, Mustapha Kemal is not a dictator, or the president of a republic, though, during the emergency produced by the Greek offensive, the National Assembly turned over its executive power to him for a period of a few months. He is merely the president of the National Assembly—the chairman of a board of directors—and nothing more. He signs its bills and treaties and receives the diplomatic representatives of foreign governments, but that is the extent of his authority. He cannot do anything else without the consent of the National Assembly, though, as commander-in-chief of the army, and by virtue of his prestige as the saviour of Turkey, his influence is, of course, very great. The vice-president of the Assembly is Raouf Bey, a brilliant young naval officer who was educated in the United States and England and who for a number of years was aide-de-camp to Admiral Buckman Pasha, the American sailor of fortune who was naval adviser to Abdul Hamid. The Grand National Assembly is, therefore, a truly democratic government in that it is really representative of the people, by whom its members are directly elected. "Backward" Turkey, in granting universal suffrage, and in giving the portfolio of minister of education to a woman, Halidé Edib Hanoum, has shown itself far more progressive than most of the "progressive" nations of Europe.

So there you have the situation as it stands to-day. The old Ottoman Empire, rotten to the core, is dead and buried. The sultans, who misruled in Turkey for six hundred years, are as extinct as the janizaries. A new Turkish state, more republican than any existing republic, is definitely with us, the latest recruit to the ranks of democracy. The Caliphate, stripped of all its political prerogatives, is to remain in Constantinople, occupying much the same relation to Islam that the Holy See does to the Roman Catholic world, but the Turkish Government—the Government of the Grand National Assembly, to give it its correct name—is to remain in Asia Minor, beyond the reach of European political pressure and far from the intrigues which so long characterized political life on the Bosphorus. The frontiers of the new Turkey, save only on the Kurdistan-Mesopotamia border, have been definitely fixed and confirmed by the Treaty of Lausanne: in Thrace by agreement with Greece; on the east by treaty with Russia and the Transcaucasian republics; on the Syrian side with France by the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement. The country is, moreover, in a better economic condition than the world has been led to suppose, for its vast natural resources remain virtually unexploited; it has an obedient and industrious population; having steadfastly refused to take the paper money road to temporary affluence and ultimate ruin, its currency is less depreciated than in many other countries which are generally regarded as more enlightened financially; and, by the apportionment of the foreign debt of the old empire—which, on August 31, 1921, was placed at

171,527,034 Turkish pounds—among the various nations which have been carved from its flanks, the external indebtedness of the new Turkey is comparatively small.

The dominant note in the course which this new Turkey has laid for herself is a grim determination henceforward to be mistress in her own house. As the first step toward achieving this end, the Capitulations, those treaties made between the Porte and the powers under which foreign residents in the empire were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Government, have been abolished, Turkey thus effecting by a stroke of the pen what it took Japan many years of diplomatic manœuvring to accomplish. The extra-territorial privileges so long enjoyed by the foreign consuls, the consular courts, the consular prisons, the foreign post-offices, have all been tossed into the discard, though, in order to save the faces of the Allies, the Turks have agreed to appoint a few foreign legal advisers who will act in an advisory capacity and nothing more, until the reorganization of the country's judicial system is completed. The Greek and Armenian communities have been so weakened that they are no longer a menace. The patriarchs of the various *millets*, shorn of their temporal powers, have been given the choice of confining their activities to religious matters or of leaving the country. Even the religious influence of the Greek patriarch has been undermined by the erection of an autocephalous Turkish Orthodox Church, under a patriarch at Caesarea, for the communicants of that faith dwelling in Asia Minor. In short, Turkey, for the first time in its history, is essentially Turkish in every phase of its national life.

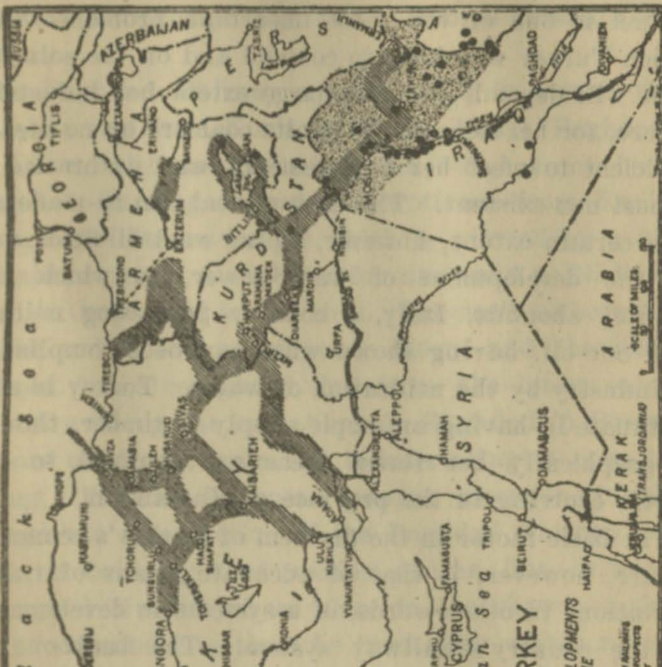
It has completely rid itself of the network of servitudes —the Capitulations, the Ottoman debt, tariff restrictions, and the like—by which for so many years the old empire was bound and rendered helpless. What Turkey wants now is to be left alone to exploit its new-found nationality and to settle down into a modernized state capable of holding its own and preponderant in the world of Islam.

Far from having had their heads turned by their military victories over the Greeks and their diplomatic victories over the Allies, far from indulging in dreams of further territorial expansion, the Turkish people, from Mustapha Kemal to the peasants in the fields, are preoccupied with the problem of internal economic development. For Turkey is to-day trying to lay the foundations for a new and sound economic life.

As the principal activity of the country is agriculture —barring the manufacture of silks and rugs there are no industries worth mentioning—the Nationalist Government has steadily encouraged the introduction of modern agricultural methods and of agricultural machinery, even when the Greeks were laying waste the land; and, in pursuance of this policy, a bank has been established at Angora for the purpose of financing the farmer and lending him funds with which to purchase implements, seeds, and live stock. In addition to the land already under cultivation in Asia Minor, there are vast stretches, such as the valley of the Meander, which were in ancient times extremely prosperous and which, with the aid of irrigation and scientific methods, can again be brought under the plough. The same is true

of Eastern Thrace, where fertile plains, yellow with grain under Turkish rule, lapsed into a neglected waste when the Greeks drove out the industrious Turkish farmers. Large estates and wealthy land owners are comparatively rare, the agricultural lands being mainly in the hands of the small farmers, who form the backbone of the Turkish state. The Anatolian peasantry, sturdy of physique, rugged of constitution, inured to hardship, hard-working, docile, quiet, honest, dependable, forms, in my opinion, the best element in Western Asia.

In minerals Asiatic Turkey is a veritable El Dorado, though heretofore, owing to the disturbed political condition of the country, only sporadic attempts have been made to unearth them. Rich silver deposits are being worked at Bulgan Maden, near Konia, and at Gumush Hane, in Armenia, but in desultory fashion. Copper is found in the Armenian Taurus, and near Trebizend, while at Arghana Maden, in Kurdistan, is a mine estimated to contain two hundred million tons of high-grade ore. Zinc is found at Karasu on the Black Sea and in the vilayet of Aidin; chrome ore is worked in Smyrna, Brusa, Adana, and Konia; there are manganese deposits in Konia and Aidin; meerschaum is exported from Eskishehr, emery from Smyrna, and borax from the Marmora. The lignite coal mines at Heraclea on the Black Sea and in the Smyrna district have an annual production of four hundred thousand tons, while the vilayets of Erzerum, Van, and Bitlis are estimated to possess enormous


NATIONALIST TURKEY
showing
THE RAILWAY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS
CONTEMPLATED UNDER THE
CHESTER CONCESSION
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
ARMENIA
KURDISTAN
SYRIA
ARABIA
AZERBAIJAN
CYPRUS
ANGORA
ERZERUM
SIVAS
ADANA
ALEPPO
DAMASCUS
MOSUL
BAGHDAD
BEIRUT
SMYRNA
TREBIZOND
BATUM
TIFLIS
DIARBEKR
KAISARIEH
SCALE OF MILES

wealth in oil, though thus far nothing has been done to exploit it.

Fuel is one of the most important problems with which Turkey will have to contend and on the solution of it will depend to a very large extent her industrial future, for her deposits of lignite coal are by no means sufficient to meet her requirements, and anthracite is almost non-existent. This lack of coal can be made up to a certain extent, however, by her vast oil-fields and by the development of water-power, in which the country abounds, Italy, a country possessing neither coal nor oil, having shown what can be accomplished in industry by the utilization of water. Turkey is also fortunate in having an ample supply of timber, though geographically her forest areas are confined to the north, centring in the province of Kastamuni.

The basic factor in the problem of Turkey's economic future, however, is that of adequate means of transportation; in other words, of a systematic development of the country's railway system. The backbone of transportation in present-day Turkey is, of course, the Anatolian system—Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie—which, starting at Haidar Pasha, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople, runs in a southeasterly direction to Eskishehr (whence there is a branch line to Angora), to Afium Karahissar (whence another branch line runs westward to Smyrna), and so to Konia, where it connects with the Baghdad Railway. The Anatolian Railway is of immense strategic, economic, and political importance, not only because it

traverses nearly the entire width of Asiatic Turkey, but because it forms the most important link in the great (though still uncompleted) Constantinople-Persian Gulf system.

The Baghdad Railway was intended to extend the Anatolian line from Konia to Adana, Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra, with numerous branches. It has now been completed—barring a few interruptions—from Konia through the Taurus range, which is pierced by a remarkable series of tunnels, as far eastward as Nisibin, which is the present end of steel. The sections between Nisibin and Mosul, and between Mosul and Sherghat, have yet to be completed, but from the latter point trains are in regular operation via Baghdad to Basra, the port of Mesopotamia. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the European powers whose nationals financed the construction of the Baghdad Railway insisted on bringing that section of the line between Adana and Muslimiyeh so close to the shores of the Gulf of Alexandretta that the tracks are within range of warships' guns. According to the original plans of the Allies for the dismemberment of Turkey, as outlined in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, that portion of the Baghdad Railway between Konia and Nisibin was to be under the control of the French, this arrangement being confirmed when France was assigned the mandates for Syria and Cilicia, but when the French evacuated the latter region in 1921 as a result of the agreement concluded by M. Franklin-Bouillon with Angora, the section between Konia and the Taurus

reverted to the Turks, while that between the Taurus and Nisibin was adopted as the line of the new Turko-Syrian frontier.

This opens up a most curious and complex situation, which we will pause a moment to examine. As things stand at present, the railways of Asiatic Turkey are, outwardly at least, under Swiss ownership. This fact was not generally known, however, until Germany defaulted on her reparations payments to the Allies, whereupon the Reparations Commission seized more than half of the thirty thousand shares of Baghdad Railway stock which were lying in the Deutsche Bank in Berlin. This seizure was made despite the protests of the German Government that the shares did not belong to Germans but to a Swiss concern—the Banque des Chemins de Fers Orientaux of Zurich. This institution for many years controlled those Balkan railways which in the eighties of the last century were financed by the Paris and Vienna houses of Rothschild, but in course of time the French interests were forced out and it passed under the control of German interests identified with the Deutsche Bank and the Banker Verein. When, as a result of the Balkan wars, the railways of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia were nationalized, the Zurich bank transferred its operations to Asiatic Turkey, acquiring 55 per cent of the stock of the Anatolian Railway (1,200 miles), which, in turn, controls the Baghdad Railway (1,700 miles), the railways around Adana (65 miles), and the terminal installations at Haider Pasha, Mersina, and Alexandretta.

Now it is generally believed that the Swiss bank is merely a cloak for the hidden German interests which are the real owners of the shares in question, but it is quite another matter to prove it, for the shrewd Teuton financiers have seen to it that the title of the Zurich institution is legally perfectly sound. Hence the Reparations Commission cannot dispose of the shares it has confiscated, for, in the eyes of international law, they are the *bona fide* property of citizens of a neutral country.

The Zurich bank is, however, facing a difficult situation, for, though the railway shares which it holds are believed to be owned by Germans, the outstanding bonds are virtually all held by Swiss investors, who demand their interest in Swiss francs. The Turkish military authorities, however, who operated the railways from 1914 to 1918, never paid the owners a sou of interest, and the British and French military authorities who followed them likewise paid nothing. During the three-year struggle in Anatolia between the Nationalists and the Greeks, neither side paid anything to Zurich, and the same holds true of the present Government at Angora, which has worked the railways since the Greek debacle. Consequently the Banque des Chemins de Fer Orientaux is swamped with unpaid obligations, being, indeed, on the verge of bankruptcy. This means that the railways really belong to the bondholders. Heretofore the Swiss bankers, feeling morally responsible for the bond issues, have paid the interest on them themselves, but the time is now approaching

when the principal of the bonds will become due. The Swiss bankers are concerned only with safeguarding the interests of the Swiss bondholders. It is now rumoured that the German financiers who are believed to control the stock are secretly negotiating with American and British bankers with a view to disposing of their holdings, it being understood that the shares, which were originally bought at 500 francs each, are now being offered for 1,200, which would appear to be a very satisfactory margin of profit. If the deal goes through, the Germans will not only line their pockets with foreign gold but they will have the even greater satisfaction of putting one over on the Reparations Commission; for, things being as they are, it is hard to see how the latter can interfere in the proposed transaction.

As for the Turks, they are making no objections to the bargaining that is going on, being quite content to accept any ownership of the railways which will bring more money into the country, though it is to be assumed that, for political reasons, they would prefer to see the properties pass under American rather than European control. The Turks are safe, whatever may happen, for the whole of the Anatolian Railway and more than half of the Baghdad system are in their physical possession. "So long as we hold the rails and rolling-stock," says Angora, "we don't in the least care who owns the shares and bonds."

When, early in 1923, the Grand National Assembly startled the conferees at Lausanne by ratifying the

much discussed Chester Concession, an entirely new factor was introduced into the Turkish economic and political situation. For if the plans of the Ottoman-American Development Company, as the Chester enterprise is officially known, are realized, virtually the whole of that portion of Asiatic Turkey to the east of Angora will eventually be covered by a network of steel which will double the mileage of the existing railway system and will connect the larger cities of the interior, as well as the principal oil-fields and mining districts, with ports on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. This will mean, furthermore, that Americans will acquire that predominant position in the Turkish field which has long been sought by British, French, and Germans.

The history of American attempts to obtain economic concessions in Turkey goes back for a quarter of a century—to 1898, to be exact—when a group of American capitalists took steps to obtain exploitation rights but, meeting with scant encouragement, soon lost interest in the matter. Ten years later, however, Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Colby M. Chester, U.S.N., while stationed in Turkish waters, succeeded in obtaining from Abdul-Hamid's Government certain development rights in the Asiatic provinces of the empire, these rights coming to be known as the Chester Concession. With them in his possession, he was able to enlist the support of another group of financiers, who, after sending investigators to Turkey, organized the first Ottoman-American Development Company, which has since been legally dissolved. Though the agreements obtained by

Admiral Chester from the Sultan's Government and the proposals made by the American concessionaires were submitted to the Turkish Parliament for ratification, they were never voted upon, the scheme being blocked by the German interests which at that time completely dominated the political and economic situation in Turkey and which had no intention of permitting Turkey's enormous natural resources to be exploited by any foreigners save themselves. During the decade that followed, the Turks, preoccupied by foreign wars and internal dissensions, gave no further heed to the matter, the idea being kept alive only by the determination and perseverance of Admiral Chester. After the war, however, when the Nationalist Government had become firmly established, the scheme was revived; a new Ottoman-American Development Company, of which Major-General George W. Goethals became the president, was organized under the laws of Delaware. To this corporation, so it is understood, Admiral Chester has sold all his rights. Shortly thereafter the Grand National Assembly at Angora, partly as a move in the shrewd game which its representative was playing at Lausanne, and partly for the purpose of bringing much-needed capital into the country, formally ratified the Ottoman-American Company's concessions, which, it should be added, were far more extensive than those originally obtained by Admiral Chester. The new company represented British as well as American capital, however; so, when it was seen that a serious diplomatic imbroglio was threatened because the concessions conflicted with others which, so the French and

British Governments claimed, had been granted by the old Ottoman régime to their own nationals, the foreign holdings in the Ottoman-American Development Company were turned over, at the request of the American State Department, to a voting trust consisting of General Goethals, Admiral H. H. Rousseau, U.S.N., and Mr. H. C. Sheridan, the American representative of Vickers, Limited, a British concern, thus insuring that the company would remain permanently in American hands. Some months afterward General Goethals resigned as president of the company, which, if popular report is to be believed, is now largely under the direction of Canadian interests, though it remains, of course, an American corporation. As a matter of fact, there is considerable mystery as to just where the stock is held and as to how much actual capital the company has behind it. Provided that the concessionaires can raise the enormous amount of capital which will be required to finance the undertaking, and provided also that Turkey is blessed with peace and with a strong and honest government, there seems no reason why the project cannot be carried through with profit to every one concerned.

According to Mr. Henry Woodhouse, who is one of the stockholders, the principal features of the company's concessions are:

1. The construction of three railway systems aggregating about 2,700 miles, so laid out as to interconnect with the existing railways, which have approximately

the same mileage. Each of the three main systems to be built forms a separate agreement, preference in priority of construction being given to the division running from Yourmortalik (a small port on the Gulf of Alexandretta which is to be developed into a great modern terminal) via Harput (whence there is to be a branch to Sivas), the Arghana copper-fields, Diarbekr, Bitlis (whence another branch will run eastward to Lake Van), Mosul, and Kirkuk, to Suleimanieh, an important oil-centre of northern Mesopotamia, close to the Persian border. This will give Turkey a great east-and-west trunk-line which will traverse the entire breadth of the country from the Mediterranean to Persia and will open up the rich mineral deposits in Armenia and Kurdistan. The next division in priority of construction comprises the lines Angora-Sivas-Samsoun, Chalti-Erzerum-Tirebuli, and Erzerum-Trebizond, thus connecting various important inland centres with ports on the Black Sea. The third division consists of a line from Angora, via Yozgad, to Samsoun; a line running from Ulu Kishla, a station on the Anatolian Railway, to connect, via Cæsarea, with the projected Angora-Sivas section: and a line to extend from Erzerum to Bayezid, on the Persian frontier.

2. The building and operation of great railway terminals, with all modern harbour, wharfage, and storage facilities, at Trebizond and Samsoun on the Black Sea and at Yourmortalik, near Alexandretta, on the Mediterranean.

3. Oil-rights in the provinces of Erzerum, Bitlis, and Van. These fields, which are still untouched, are estimated to be fully as rich as the Mosul oil area and may prove to be as productive as any in the world. It should be added that the company's title to these fields is unquestioned, and that they can be developed by it no matter what the termination of the controversy over the Mosul fields may be.

4. The mineral rights in a zone extending twenty kilometers on either side of the projected railways. This contains nearly a hundred copper, gold, platinum, iron, zinc, tin, nickel, and other mines, the potential value of which is estimated to be enormous. The Ottoman-American Company's titles to these properties is unquestioned.

5. The construction for the Turkish Government of a capital city, to be built at or near Angora on the most modern lines. This clause of the concession can be extended to include the construction of as many towns as the concessionaires can build to replace the hundred or more towns and villages destroyed by the Greek armies.

The company has been given two years in which to complete the plans and decide on the exact routes to be followed by the railways between the designated terminals, together with other privileges and elastic options which make the concession a very liberal one, the liberality of the terms being due to the fact that the Turkish Government is to share in the profits.

In other words, the American concessionaires, and whoever may share the concession with them, are to be in partnership with the Turkish Government for a period of ninety-nine years in developing a territory very nearly as large as our three Pacific Coast States put together, with three times their population, and, if the reports of the experts, American, British, French, Italian, and German are to be believed, fully as rich in natural resources of every description. Nor is this amazing concession in some remote and inaccessible land, like Siberia or the Rand or the Yukon. The territory which it comprises lies, instead, at the cross-roads of three continents, at Europe's very gate.

It is well to bear in mind that French and British interests question the title of only a small portion of the Chester Concession. The grant of the railway section from Samsoun, on the Black Sea, to Sivas is disputed by the French, who claim that prior to the war the then Turkish minister of finance, Djavid Bey, promised to give them a concession for a railway from Samsoun to Sivas, subject to approval by the Turkish Parliament (which approval was never given), in return for which they agreed to lend the Turkish Government eight hundred million francs, of which, it is claimed, five hundred million were actually advanced before war was declared in 1914. But, even if the Samsoun-Sivas railway project should be eliminated from the Chester Concession, the difference would be hardly noticeable. Mr. Woodhouse, who is one of the stockholders of the Ottoman-American Development Company, is authority

for the statement that both the Turkish Government and the American concessionaires would, on the contrary, be glad to have French interests build this line provided the French would agree to make it a purely industrial enterprise, divorce it from all military and political designs, and refrain from seeking such privileges as exemption from taxation, admission of French goods without duty, and the like. The conflict between the British claims to the Mosul oil-fields and the concessions granted by Turkey to the Chester interests I shall discuss in a succeeding chapter.

Despite the initiative and determination which the Turkish leaders are showing in the organization and development of their new state, one constantly hears the assertion that the Turk does not possess the qualities which will enable him to replace the economic productivity of the minorities whom he has expelled to a degree that will make Turkey a going concern. On this question it is difficult to hazard even a conjecture. If his future is to be judged in the scale of his past performances, failure may be confidently predicted. But, as has been proved time and time again, prophecy in regard to Turkish affairs is always dangerous. The old Byzantine proverb, "Think out logically what ought to happen and what can reasonably be expected to happen, and then be sure that it will not happen," still holds good when applied to modern Turkey. The alertness and determination and vigour which appear to be inspiring the citizens of the new Turkish state

may prove to be permanent and not transient; their newly found energy may prove capable of diversion from the field of war into the field of industry. Every one agrees that the Turks are fully alive to the fact that, though military prowess may temporarily save their country from destruction, a nation consisting solely of warriors cannot hope to exist for long against foreign economic competition. Everywhere one finds the Turks blaming themselves for having so long neglected trade, engineering, and the professions, while those who can still afford to send their children abroad are giving them commercial or technical educations instead of bringing them up as officers or officials. Nothing has more strongly emphasized the amazing change which has taken place in Turkey than the programme laid before the Grand National Assembly in September, 1923, by the premier, Fethi Bey,[1] for the education of women. This plan provides that henceforward equal importance will be paid to the education of boys and girls, it being proposed, among other things, that secondary schools for girls shall immediately be established in all the principal centres. Other steps advocated by the Government include numerous reforms in taxation, modernization of the penal system, an improvement in the condition of public servants, introduction of a régime of rigid economy, and a progressive liquidation of the internal debt. The Government intends, so the premier has announced, to engage foreign experts and advisers

[1] Raouf Bey resigned in the summer of 1923, being succeeded by Fethi Bey.

for all administrative departments which require special knowledge, particularly in the ministries of education, agriculture, public works, and finance.

It is entirely possible, therefore, that the next generation of Turks may produce a crop of efficient mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, and professional men; and if aptitude depends at all upon race in the physical sense, there is no reason why the Turkish Moslems of to-morrow should not be as successful economically as the Turkish Christians of yesterday, for the same racial strains are intermingled in both. The truth of the matter is that we have so long complacently taken it for granted that everything that is worth while in Turkey is Christian, that it is a distinct blow to our *amour propre* to hear the suggestion that the Turk may possibly succeed in struggling along, even in building up a prosperous and well governed state, without Christian aid. Personally, I believe that any people which in less than five years has staged such an astounding military and political come-back can be depended upon to work out its own economic salvation.

The attitude of the Turkish delegates at Lausanne, which so irritated and baffled the European diplomatists, was not, as certain sections of the press insisted, due to egotism or intransigence or arrogance, but to a deep-seated suspicion of the Allies' motives and sincerity. As a matter of fact, the Turks have shown surprising wisdom and moderation in their hour of triumph. That the Turk has substantial grounds for his conviction that, whenever a foot is yielded to

Western diplomacy, a mile will be taken from him if it can be, no fair-minded person who is familiar with Turkish history will attempt to deny. Recognising the insincerity of the Allies' protestations, remembering their broken pledges, his suspicions were instantly aroused by any evidence he saw of Western political and economic grip on his country, whether it took the form of solicitude for the minorities, or snivelling over the Capitulations, or striving to extract further political privileges and economic concessions. So, as a short cut to national independence, he wiped them all out, heedless of the horrified protests of the Allies and their friends.

We Americans, curiously enough, are neither sceptical nor cynical in matters of foreign policy, particularly where American interests are not directly concerned. We are, on the contrary, a credulous and impressionable people, easily swayed by sentiment and avid swallowers of propaganda. So, having made the initial mistake of weighing our opinions in the scale of our prejudices, we accepted at their face-value the pious protestations of the Allied diplomatists that their motives were purely altruistic, that they were seeking only the best interests of the peoples of the Near East, including the Turks, and that it was a grave injustice to intimate that their policies were influenced by such material things as land or railways or oil. So entranced were we by these lofty sentiments, so skilfully were our emotions played on when Curzon, Venizelos, *et al* pulled out the *vox humana* stop, so effectually did the Allies mask their

selfish and sordid ambitions with a smoke-screen of oratory and propaganda, that we never recognised the obvious fact that what they were really after was the Turk's watch and chain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SITUATION IN SYRIA AND CILICIA

It is a curious and significant fact that the steadily widening cleavage between Great Britain and France over the question of German reparations had its beginnings in Western Asia. For, though it is a far cry from the Levant to the Ruhr, it cannot be denied that the happenings in the one have had their repercussion in the other. It is a question, as I have said elsewhere, of a conflict of imperialisms.

Understand, first of all, that the Near Eastern policies of the two nations are diametrically opposed. Each is jealous of, and intriguing against, the other. The mainspring of Britain's policy is to effect a hedgemony of all the Arab peoples dwelling between the head of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, thereby bringing the whole of Western Asia within the British sphere, making of it a bridge-land to connect British India with British Africa. France, on the other hand, in order to preserve her political and commercial influence in the Near East, feels that she must prevent Britain from gaining complete ascendancy in the Arab lands or from becoming any stronger than she already is at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. It is obvious,

therefore, that these policies are in direct conflict with each other and cannot be reconciled.

The truth of the matter is that the post-war cleavage between the former Allies had its beginning in the network of pernicious secret treaties to which both powers were parties and most of which had to do with the division of the Turkish loot, the richest spoils resulting from the Allied victory. These treaties, which were predicated on the breaking of the most solemn pledges which nations could utter, were characterized by the most shameless intrigue, deceit, and bad faith, and, as might have been expected, produced an atmosphere of international jealousy and suspicion whose effects will be felt for long years to come. As a result of the mutual jealousy and suspicion thus aroused, England and France did their best to "double-cross" each other—hence the near-enmity which to-day exists between them and which extends all the way from Syria to the Ruhr.

France's occupation of Syria is a thorn in the side of Britain, a wedge driven deep into that hedgemony over the Arab peoples of which the British statesmen dream. Syria, be it remembered, was conquered by a British army. France had nothing, or next to nothing, to do with it. When the Mudania Armistice, which ended the war with Turkey, was signed in October, 1918, General Allenby's forces were in occupation of the country as far northward as Aleppo and beyond. It was with considerable reluctance, therefore, that the British relinquished Syria to the French, for they realized that, could it have remained in their possession it would

have rounded out their scheme of empire in Western Asia by linking up Mesopotamia with the Mediterranean; and, secondly, because its possession, by enabling them to place an Arab prince on the Syrian throne, would greatly have strengthened British influence with the Arabs, and such influence, as I shall show in a later chapter, is a very important factor in realization of Great Britain's imperialistic schemes.

But Lloyd George was shrewd enough to realize that Great Britain, in view of her vast acquisitions of territory in other parts of the world as a result of the war, could not with decency demand Syria as well, even if she had not secretly promised to hand it over to France by the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Accordingly, at the conference held at San Remo in April, 1920, it was agreed that Syria, together with the contiguous portion of Asia Minor known as Cilicia should be assigned to France while Palestine and Mesopotamia should go to England. But at this point the two powers found themselves in a most equivocal position. Their only title to these Asiatic territories, remember, was by right of conquest, yet both countries had proclaimed, over and over again, that they were not waging a war of conquest, that it was imperialism that they had been fighting, that schemes for territorial aggrandizement at the expense of other peoples were confined to the German side. Hence they found themselves in the embarrassing predicament of having to reconcile their repeated pledges with their determination to keep these conquered lands. The solution was provided by the novel expedient of mandates, the authorship

of which has been attributed both to President Wilson and to Earl Balfour,[1] and the two powers proceeded to take possession of the coveted territories as mandatories under the League of Nations, which, in December, 1920, gave its approval to the transaction.

In considering the Syrian question it should be borne in mind, as I reminded the readers of "By Camel and Car to the Peacock Throne," that a very large proportion of the people of Syria confidently expected that, as a result of the Allied victory, and by virtue of the promises made by the Allies, they would be given absolute independence, whereas they found, to their astonishment and disappointment, that the Allied statesmen had no such intention. The report of the King-Crane Commission on Mandates shows that, of the petitions received by the commission, 73.5 per cent asked for the absolute independence of Syria, though this term was seldom used in the sense of an entire freedom from any foreign guidance. But the Supreme Council declared that the Syrians had not yet reached a stage of development where they could be intrusted with complete independence and that they must be placed under the tutelage of more advanced nations until such time as they were able to stand alone. Small wonder that the Syrians, a peaceful and progressive people, having a glorious historical background, bitterly resented being thus bracketed with the natives of the former German colonies in East Africa, South-West

[1] Since the above was written I have received a letter from ex-President Wilson informing me that the mandate idea originated with General J. C. Smuts, prime minister of the Union of South Africa.

Africa, the Cameroons, and Polynesia, while the Allies, almost in the same breath, had, at Britain's behest, recognised the complete independence of the Hedjaz, that strip of worthless desert with its population of half-savage tribesmen. But, when the Syrians found that a mandatory form of government was to be thrust upon them, they made it amply clear that they preferred American guidance to either British or French, as is shown by the following extracts from the long-suppressed report of the King-Crane Commission:

> Our survey left no room for doubt of the choice of the majority of the Syrian people. Although it was not known whether America would take a mandate at all; and although the Commission could not only give no assurance upon that point, but had rather to discourage expectation; nevertheless, upon the face of the returns, America was the first choice of 1,152 of the petitions presented—more than 60 per cent—while no other Power had as much as 15 per cent first choice. . . .
>
> If for any reason the mandate for Syria is not given to America, then the Commissioners recommend, in harmony with the express request of the majority of the Syrian people, that the mandate be given to Great Britain. The tables show that there are 1,073 petitions in all Syria for Great Britain as Mandatory, if America did not take the mandate. This is very greatly in excess of any similar expression for the French. . . .
>
> On the contrary—for whatever reason—more than 60 per cent of all the petitions, presented to the Commission, directly and strongly protested against any French Mandate. Without going into a discussion of the reasons for this situation, the Commissioners are reluctantly compelled to believe that the situation itself

makes it impossible to recommend a single French mandate for all Syria.

But, when America refused to accept any responsibilities in the Near East, the Supreme Council, disregarding the report of the commission, and cynically repudiating its own solemnly announced resolution that "the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power," gave the mandate for Syria to France, thereby carrying out the secret agreement which had been made between Sir Mark Sykes and Georges Picot four years before.

Let us examine for a moment the "rights" on which the French base their claim to Syria. To put it briefly, Roman Catholic missionaries, using principally the French language, have been labouring for several centuries in Syria, where they have developed an extensive system of churches, schools, and monasteries. France has had commercial relations with Syria and small groups of citizens residing in the country since the Middle Ages. France has taken a special interest in the Maronites and intervened in their behalf in 1860, when she invaded Syria and captured Damascus. French has long been the principal Western language used in Syria. None of these relationships, however, as Messrs. King and Crane point out, give the least "right" to claim territory or mandatory control. Otherwise, it could be held that America, through her missionary and business interests, had acquired a measure of political rights in India, China, Japan, Persia, Africa, Mexico, South America, and Syria itself.

France herself could claim all of Turkey with nearly the same justification. If the doctrine was accepted that missionary and commercial relationships with a country constituted a ground on which to base territorial claims, all the missionary work in the world would be compromised.[1]

England and France having, thanks to the convenient subterfuge afforded by the mandate inspiration, apportioned the Turkish loot to their more or less mutual satisfaction, the British troops were withdrawn from the country, and their place was taken by the French. But the latter found an obstacle to their complete control of the territory in the form of the Emir Feisal, the handsome and picturesque son of King Hussein of the Hedjaz, who had played a brilliant and romantic part in the British campaign against the Turks. In command of a force of irregular horse, with the brilliant young Englishman, Colonel Lawrence, as his chief of staff, he had raided the Damascus-Medina railway, held by the Turks, and later organized a solid Arab advance northward, ultimately becoming General Allenby's extreme right wing beyond the Jordan.

In April, 1920, at the very time that the conferees at San Remo were allotting Syria to France, Feisal, with the full knowledge and approval of the British, had himself crowned at Damascus as "King of Syria," his brother Abdullah, now emir of Transjordania, being hailed as "King of Mesopotamia." For the *fait accompli* with which the French thus found themselves confronted, they believed, and with some reason, that

[1] My book, "By Camel and Car to the Peacock Throne."

the British were responsible. That Feisal, a British puppet, was hostile to the French, was evident from the first, and it was also evident that the Arabs, who form a large majority of the population of Syria, were with him to a man. General Gouraud, who was then French high commissioner in Syria, told me that, had Feisal displayed a willingness to co-operate with the French and to accept a cabinet of French advisers, he would have been permitted to retain the Syrian throne. "His master's voice," in other words, must come from Paris instead of London; he would be required to accept a status akin to that of those other puppet rulers—the emperor of Annam, the king of Cambodia, the bey of Tunis, the sultan of Morocco—who speak and act as the Quai d'Orsay pulls the strings. But Feisal, his head turned by his sudden acquisition of a throne, and overestimating his own strength, openly defied the French, who promptly availed themselves of the opportunity to remove him from their path. A French force advanced upon Damascus, Feisal's Arab troops were smashed by a few French battalions in a single afternoon, and the "King of Syria" made his ignominious escape to Palestine hidden in a freight-car. It is scarcely necessary to add that France's action in expelling Feisal aroused the bitter hostility of King Hussein and the whole Shereefian clan, while the Arabs of Syria were still further antagonized by the ill-advised action of the French authorities in imposing a fine of ten million francs on the people of Damascus as a punishment for having supported Feisal.

The world was now treated to the spectacle of Britain and France, who for four years had fought shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy, engaging in a diplomatic chess-game, with the whole of Western Asia as a board and political-commercial dominance in the Near East as the stake. The first move in this stupendous game was made by England, when, in June, 1921, a year after the French had driven Feisal out of Syria, a British cruiser conveyed him and his suite from Jiddah, in Arabia, to Basra, the port of Mesopotamia, and on August 25, at Baghdad, he was proclaimed by the British high commissioner as "King of 'Iraq." When the British thus placed a sworn enemy of France on the throne of Mesopotamia, whose frontiers march with those of Syria for upward of four hundred miles, it naturally aroused French resentment. But, though France realized that her rule in Syria was directly menaced by Feisal's thus being given the throne of an adjacent country, where he and his adherents were free to foment plots against the French authorities in Syria and to encourage the restless Arabs of the hinterland to harass the Syrian frontiers, she could not well protest Britain's action, though it necessitated a large increase in the French army of occupation. But a few months later—October 20, 1921—she made a much more effective counter-move by signing an accord with the Nationalist Government at Angora and withdrawing all her troops from Cilicia, which region, allotted to her under the terms of the mandate, she restored to Turkey, thereby releasing from that front a large

number of Turkish troops which were promptly moved to positions where they could threaten the British forces in Mosul and at the Dardanelles. And, as military men will quickly realize, a comparatively small Turkish force, holding the interior lines, could effectually immobilize a much larger British force, it being, moreover, far more costly to maintain a British soldier at Chanak or Mosul than it was to keep a Turkish soldier "containing" him at Bigha or Diarbekr, this ratio giving a fairly accurate measure of the advantages possessed by the Turks over the British in the event of further hostilities. By thus releasing the Turkish forces in Cilicia for service elsewhere, the French, past masters at the diplomatic chess-game, retaliated with a vengeance for the support given by the British to her enemy Feisal.

Let us now return, for a moment, to the Cilician situation. Cilicia, it should be explained, is a term having no modern geographic significance. The Cilicia of the ancients covered nearly the same territory as the medieval kingdom of Lesser Armenia, which included the territory comprised in the present Turkish vilayet of Adana, the sanjak of Mar'ash, and a portion of the Syrian province of Aleppo. The population of this region, though overwhelmingly Turkish, still has a considerable Armenian element, the census figures for 1914 showing that it contained about 500,000 Moslems as against 175,000 Armenians.

In 1918-19 Cilicia was occupied by General Allenby's forces after their conquest of Syria, but, as already

explained, was turned over to the French in accordance with the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The San Remo Conference of 1920 assigned to France, as part of the mandated territory of Syria, a strip of southern Cilicia and Kurdistan extending from the left bank of the River Jihan (which enters the Mediterranean at a point midway between Adana and Alexandretta) as far northward as Nisibin, thé inclusion of this territory in the mandate being of particular significance (1) because it insured French protection to the Christian inhabitants of Lesser Armenia, and (2) because it placed nearly the whole of the Adana-Nisibin section of the Baghdad Railway, with a length of about four hundred miles, under French control. The remainder of Cilicia—by which is meant the rich, mountain-ringed plain at the head of the Gulf of Alexandretta, though not included in the Syrian mandate, was brought within the French sphere of influence in Asia Minor by the Tripartite Agreement, executed at the same time as the Treaty of Sèvres, Italy being rewarded with a sphere of influence comprising that portion of the Turkish littoral which borders the Gulf of Adalia.

No sooner had the British withdrawn from Cilicia than the Armenians, emboldened by assurances of French protection, began to assert themselves. Throughout the eighteen months that followed Cilicia was the scene of constant warfare between the French, aided by a force of Armenian volunteers calling themselves the Légion Arménienne, and the Turkish Nationalists,- the latter being reinforced by numerous

bands of irregulars, recruited from the local Moslem population, known as *chettas.* Unable to resist the repeated onslaughts of the Turks, the Franco-Armenian forces were pushed nearer and nearer to the coast, the battle-line leaving in its wake, as it moved steadily toward the sea, a scorched and ruined country.

Despite their apparently haphazard and casual character, the Nationalist operations in Cilicia were dictated by a clearly defined policy, being designed to thwart the project, as put forward by Armenian irredentists, of creating a Franco-Armenian state in this region—of, in short, reviving the Lesser Armenia of history and placing it under French protection. That this scheme had received encouragement from the French is certain, and it was the hope of realizing it which induced a large number of Armenians to move into Cilicia in 1919. But as soon as the French, who already had their hands full in Syria, became fully awake to the Nationalists' strength, they relaxed their efforts, realizing, no doubt, that the game was not worth the candle. When, early in the autumn of 1921, it became evident that the French could not hope to maintain themselves in Cilicia without heavy reinforcements, which General Gouraud, the commander-in-chief in Syria, could not spare, and which the Government could not afford to send out from home, steps were taken to arrive at an agreement with the Nationalists, though it was apparent from the first that any such agreement to which the Turks would consent would involve a breach of faith with France's ally, England,

and, incidentally, entail the sacrifice of the Armenians. The Government at Paris, still deeply resentful over the Feisal episode and by no means loath to even its score with England, secretly despatched a representative, M. Henri Franklin-Bouillon, to Angora, where, in October, 1921, he concluded an agreement with the Nationalists whereby the French agreed to evacuate such portions of Cilicia as still remained in their possession. This pact provided that the southern frontier of Turkey, as defined in the Treaty of Sèvres, was to be moved southward about forty miles for the whole distance from the Gulf of Alexandretta to the Mesopotamian frontier. In accordance with the terms of this agreement the French evacuated the whole of Cilicia and adopted as the northern frontier of Syria a line running from Payas, a small town on the coast north of Alexandretta, to Choban Beg, a station on the Baghdad Railway about fifty miles north of Aleppo, and thence along the railway to Nisibin, whence it runs to the Tigris and down that river as far as Jeziret ibn Omar, thus restoring the towns of Killes, Aintab, Mardin and Urfa, with an area of nearly sixteen thousand square miles and an estimated population of six hundred and fifty thousand, to the Turks.

What England thought of this was made amply clear in the note addressed to the French Government on November 5, 1921, by the British minister for foreign affairs, Lord Curzon, who pointedly called France's attention to the fact that

the agreement involves formal recognition by France of the Grand National Assembly of Angora as the

sovereign authority in Turkey, in which case a peace concluded with Angora would be contrary to the Franco-British Treaty of September, 1914, and to the London Pact of November 4, 1915.

This provision for the withdrawal of French troops from the territory handed over to Turkey ignores French obligations under Article 8 of the Tripartite Agreement of August 10, 1920, to maintain troops in the zone of special French interests until the French, British, and Italian Governments are agreed in considering that the Treaty of Peace with Turkey is being executed and effectively guaranteed.

To appease the British Government, whose foreign minister, Lord Curzon, openly charged France with bad faith when he remarked, in the course of a public address, that peace would never be achieved "if one Power tries to steal a march on another and concludes arrangements on its own account," Franklin-Bouillon was recalled from Turkey, thereby putting an end to France's prospect of securing from the Turks certain valuable concessions, the negotiations for which were well under way.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement the Angora Government issued a general amnesty proclamation, announcing that all the Christians in Cilicia would be exempted from service in the Turkish armies. But it quickly became evident that the hatreds which had been engendered in this region were far too bitter to be allayed by any such method, for the Armenians had not forgotten the wholesale massacres perpetrated by the Turks at Adana in

1909, while the excesses committed by the Armenians during the period of the French occupation were still fresh in the Moslem mind. It is my belief, and the French officials with whom I discussed the question agreed with me, that nothing was further from the wish of the Nationalist leaders than to have the Armenians of Cilicia subjected to further ill treatment; but the Armenians, feeling that they had been betrayed by the French, and sceptical of Turkish assurances, fled across the Syrian border by the tens of thousands, so that when the Turkish civil governor arrived he found himself confronted with the task of administering a province which had not only been devastated but had been emptied of a large part of its population.[1]

Syria under the French mandate is in area equivalent to the six New England States put together; its total population is probably in the neighbourhood of three millions, of whom fully two thirds are Moslems. The Christians of Syria consist chiefly of Maronites and Greek Orthodox, these two sects being sharply divided on the choice of a mandatory power, the Maronites, who belong to the Latin communion, favouring France, while the Greek Orthodox, who, up to the collapse of Russia, had considered themselves "protégés" of that power, had transferred their allegiance to England.

Though, according to the phraseology of the mandate, the Syrians have been classified with the Turks, the Kurds, the Armenians, the Arabs, and the inhabitants

[1] For further details of the Cilician situation the reader is referred to the articles by Mr. Clair Price in "Current History."

of the former German colonies in Africa and Polynesia, as a "backward people," they are, as every one who has lived among them will admit, the most progressive of all the Christian races of the Near East. One of the foremost authorities on the subject, D. G. Hogarth, the famous English explorer, has this to say of them: "There is no more enterprising, no keener intellect in the Nearer East, than the Syrian of the Fringe, capable of the highest Levantine civilization and triumphant competitor with the Greek in the latter's chosen field, the marts of Alexandria and all lower Egypt." In his "Modern Egypt," Lord Cromer writes: "Whether from a moral, social, or intellectual point of view, the Syrian stands on a distinctly high level. . . . A high-class Syrian is an accomplished gentleman, whose manners and general behaviour admit of his being treated on a footing of perfect social equality by high-class Europeans. His intellectual level is also unquestionably high."

Though the French have an undeniable genius for governing Oriental races, their administration of Syria has not been crowned by the same success as their efforts in, say, North Africa. For this there are numerous reasons, the chief one being the latent hostility of the Syrians themselves, who, when the French mandate was imposed upon them, got what they did not want. On the other hand, the overwhelming preference shown by the Syrians for the United States or Great Britain as the mandatory power deeply wounded the *amour propre* of the French, who vented their pique and irritation in

numerous repressive measures and irritating restrictions. Instead of trying to conciliate the Syrians, a proud, sensitive, high-spirited people, the French tried to instill fear into them by means of penalties of one kind and another, unnecessarily harsh court-martial sentences, and needless military demonstrations. In other words, they used the iron hand where they should have used the velvet glove. Moreover, France's choice of officials was not happy, for she sent to Syria men who had received their training in colonial administration among the half-savage tribes of her African possessions, and these men attempted to use the same methods in dealing with the Syrians that they had found successful with the blacks of Senegal and the Ivory Coast. To make matters worse, the French, in selecting natives to fill certain important posts, made several extremely bad appointments, notably in Damascus, where they appointed as governor and as chief of police respectively two Syrians who had been dismissed from the Turkish service for incompetency and corruption and had been living in enforced exile in Paris. The Syrians assert that intrigue and corruption are more prevalent among the French officials than they were in the bad old days among the Turks, but this I can neither affirm nor deny. Whether these accusations are justified or not, the fact remains that the Syrians, embittered by the attitude of the French and deeply resentful, have retaliated by inaugurating a form of passive resistance so subtle that the French are unable to punish it, yet so insidious and determined that it seriously threatens the success of French rule.

After carefully sifting the numerous reasons which are advanced by the Syrians for their opposition to the French, it seems to me that there are only four which are worthy of serious consideration. The anti-French element asserts (1) that the French, by the substitution of their customs and language for native habits and tongues, are seeking to make the people over into an inferior brand of Frenchmen, whereas the Syrians wish to preserve the Arabic language and their individuality as a nation; (2) that the French suffered so heavily financially as a result of the Great War that they have not been able to restore France herself, much less to give adequate financial assistance to Syria; (3) that the French intend to exploit Syria for the profit of Frenchmen rather than to develop it for the benefit of the Syrians: (4) that the French are behaving as conquerors instead of temporary guardians, and that Syria, instead of enjoying the freedom guaranteed it by the Allies, has become, to all intents and purposes, a French possession.

There are, however, numerous achievements which must be placed to the credit of the French. An initial step toward giving the country a representative government was taken on March 31, 1923, when the Syrian Federation, consisting of the governments of Aleppo, Damascus, and the Great Lebanon, and the territory of the Alouite, was inaugurated at Damascus. Material progress under the French has also been comparatively rapid: roads have been built, trees planted, streets widened, harbour facilities improved, railways mod-

ernized, an efficient constabulary organized, disorder and brigandage suppressed, over a considerable portion of the country, and agriculture encouraged. The only reason that more has not been accomplished along these lines is because of the financial difficulties under which France herself is labouring. The French officials with whom I talked, from the high commissioner down, impressed me as being for the most part broad-minded, earnest, conscientious men, who fully realize the responsibilities their country has assumed in accepting the mandate for Syria, and who are doing their utmost to teach the Syrians how "to stand upon their feet and play the game."

But, as I said in an earlier book on this subject, I do not believe that the mandatory form of government will prove successful. It is neither a colony, a possession, a protectorate, nor that vague thing known as a sphere of influence; it is merely a political abstraction. The mandatory form of government was, in its inception, partly a political expedient, partly an experiment in idealism, which the French dislike because it limits their authority and hampers their freedom of action, and which the Syrians detest because it impairs their sovereignty and wounds their pride. The French mandate for Syria, like the British mandate for Mesopotamia, was founded on the cynical breaking of a solemn pledge. It holds forth no definite promise of ultimate independence to the Syrians, the vast majority of whom are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the French are there to stay unless they are ousted by force.

As typifying their political vassalage, they point to the fact that even the newly adopted flag of Syria, a banner of white and green, has the French tricolour imposed upon it.

Unless the French will consent to grant the Syrians a far greater measure of autonomy than they have granted the peoples of other countries under French administration; unless they will bring to an abrupt end the rigorous military rule which has so exasperated the people, unless they are prepared to abandon all thought of exploiting the country for the aggrandizement of France and to inaugurate a policy of developing it for the benefit of the Syrians; unless they can placate the Syrians, who always have an eye out for the main chance, by bringing about an era of exceptional prosperity, I do not believe that French rule in Syria, save, perhaps, in some vague and shadowy form, can long endure.

Though the economic foundation in Syria is perfectly sound, a rapid development of the country cannot be hoped for, until certain precedent conditions have been realized: first, a just settlement of the whole Near Eastern question; and, secondly, a sincere and cordial Anglo-French rapprochement which would end the general uncertainty that is at present throttling all business expansion. Meanwhile, those Syrian business men who believed that French control would mean unprecedented prosperity have become sullenly anti-French because they are convinced that the country's economic distress is due to penuriousness. The situation

has recently been still further complicated by the withdrawal of a majority of the French advisers and a reduction of the budget for Syria, while the projected evacuation of the greater part of the French troops would indicate that France has realized that the development of the country is not worth while at the price. It now seems probable, indeed, that she will decide to evacuate the whole of North Syria, which, since the reduction of the French garrisons, has been overrun with brigands, in which case it is to be assumed that the Turks would reoccupy the country from their present frontier down to the northern border of the Lebanon, leaving only South Syria, with the important seaport of Beirut, and possibly Damascus, in French hands.

If Syria occupied a position of such immense strategic importance as does Turkey or Egypt, or if it possessed Turkey's vast natural resources, the case would be entirely different; but the country has no first-class harbours, its frontiers on all sides are open to invasion, and it is believed to be poor in minerals, though this may be due to insufficient exploration. With a powerful Nationalist Turkey on the north, with hostile Bedouin tribes and the revengeful Feisal on the east, with an aloof and unsympathetic Britain in Palestine, and Feisal's brother, Abdullah, in Transjordania, and with a dissatisfied native population which is only awaiting a favourable opportunity to make trouble, the task undertaken by the French is a trying and thankless one.

But, when all is said and done, the chief argument against an indefinite continuance of French rule in

Syria is that France is not wanted there. It was a British statesman—Campbell-Bannerman, if my memory serves me—who summed it all up when he said that most peoples prefer to be self-governed rather than well governed.

CHAPTER IX

KEEPING PROMISES IN THE PROMISED LAND

WHEN Mr. Balfour imitated Jehovah by promising to the Jews the Promised Land, he placed his Government in a most embarrassing position. For, though most people think of Palestine as populated mainly by Jews, with a sprinkling of Christians and Moslems, the fact is that the bulk of the inhabitants are Mohammedans, of whom there are upward of 600,000 as against 80,000 Jews and 85,000 Christians. Thus it will be seen that not only are the Jews outnumbered by the Moslems in a ratio of seven and a half to one, but that they are also outnumbered by the Christians, a fact which has made it extremely difficult for the British Government to explain, much less carry out, the promise implied in the Balfour Declaration.

The home of two religions which have spread around the world, and close neighbour to that of a third, this narrow strip of land holds sites sacred to them all, and is still the goal of their pilgrims from nearly every nation under the sun. For it must be remembered that to the Jew and the Mohammedan, equally with the Christian, Jerusalem is the Holy City, for the rock from which rose the great altar in front of the Temple

of Israel is for the Mohammedan the spot on which the Prophet prayed, and inferior in sanctity only to the Kaaba at Mecca. In Hebron, the Jew, the Christian, and the Mohammedan have, each in his turn, erected a sanctuary about the tombs of the common fathers of their faiths. And a similar overlapping of religious interest is to be found throughout the land, from Jaffa to the Jordon, from Beersheba up to Dan. Hence no one religion can rightfully claim the country for its own, for the roots of Judaism, of Christianity, and of Islam sink deep into the soil of Palestine and frequently entwine the same stones. Once this is understood, it is easy to realize the acuteness of the problems which have arisen in her administration. And these religious problems have been immensely complicated by the political jealousies and intrigues of all Europe and half of Asia.

Though the Lloyd George Government was guilty of many indiscretions and did many amazing things, none was more short-sighted, whether viewed from the standpoint of a sound imperial policy or from that of sheer common sense, none was more provocative of future trouble, than its expression of sympathy with the political aspirations of Jewish Zionists as contained in a letter written on November 2, 1917, by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, as he then was, at that time the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, to Baron Rothschild, the great Jewish financier who is the head of the Zionist movement in England. This letter, the immediate publication of which was authorized by the British cabinet, contained the following momentous

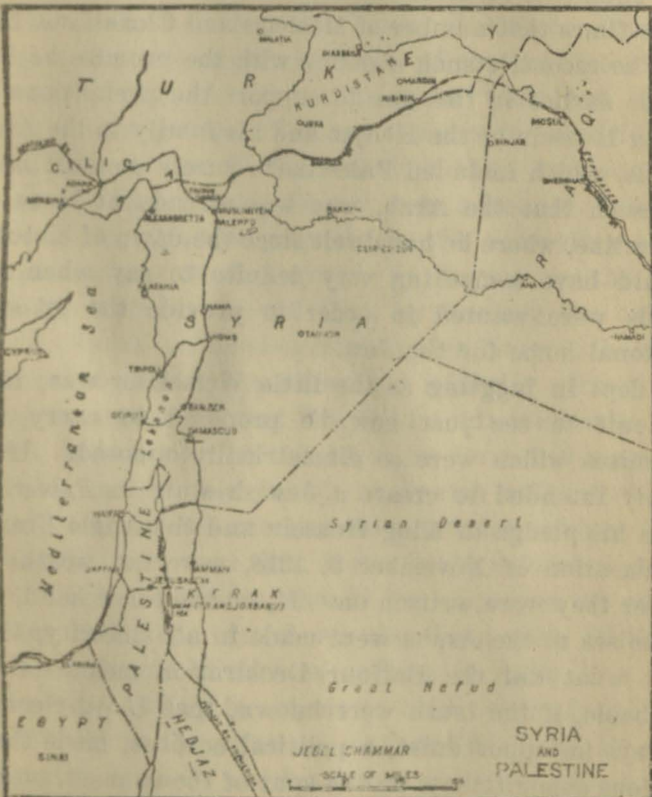
paragraph, which has come to be known as the Balfour Declaration :

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavour to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

This letter, written at a time when the Allied cause was in desperate straits, when the military might of America had not yet had time to make itself felt on the European battle-fronts, when Jerusalem remained unconquered, and when the war had still a year to run, was, of course, dictated by political expediency. But, though it doubtless contributed to weaken the "war-will" of the Jews of the Central Empires, and to gain for the Allies the support in some measure of the Jews in neutral countries, its wisdom, in view of the conflict of interests which inevitably must arise were its implied promise to be carried out, is questionable.

Though the phraseology of the declaration was guarded and non-committal, and though nothing, it would seem, could be clearer or more explicit than the reservation "that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine," the Zionists, as might have been expected, gave it an interpretation wholly different from that intended by its authors.

Emphasizing the first half of the declaration and ignoring the remainder, they loudly proclaimed it to be a pledge on the part of the British Government to



turn Palestine over to the Jews, who would be permitted to erect there a sovereign state in which political power would be in the hands of the Jewish minority.

It is by no means clear what Lloyd George had in mind for Palestine when he authorized his foreign minister to issue such a statement. If it was really his intention to establish 80,000 Jews as the rulers of nine times that number of Moslems and Christians, how did he reconcile such a policy with the promise he had made earlier in the war to support the pretensions of King Hussein of the Hedjaz and his family to the Arab lands, which included Palestine? Surely he must have foreseen that the Arab, who was already at home in Palestine, where he has dwelt since the dawn of history, would have something very definite to say when his lands were wanted in order to provide the missing national home for the Jew.

Adept in juggling as the little Welshman was, it is difficult to see just how he proposed to carry out promises which were so diametrically opposed. If he really intended to create a Jewish state in Palestine, then his pledge to King Hussein and the Anglo-French Declaration of November 8, 1918, were not worth the paper they were written on. If, on the other hand, his promises to the Arabs were made in all sincerity, then just what did the Balfour Declaration mean? It is probable, if the truth were known, that Lloyd George, always an opportunist, a political acrobat, made these various commitments on the spur of the moment, on the theory that the future would take care of itself.

The situation thus created was an impossible one. It was obvious from the outset that the small Jewish minority could not hope politically to dominate the overwhelming Moslem majority (to say nothing of the

Christians) save by force of arms, and that force must be supplied by England. In other words, the Zionists not only expected the British Government to turn the administration of Palestine over to them, lock, stock, and barrel, but they also expected Britain either to coerce the non-Jewish elements of the population into accepting Jewish rule or to force them out of the country altogether. Various schemes for realizing the ambitions of the Zionists, most of them impracticable, many of them grossly unjust, were advanced. Some of the Zionist leaders proposed to rid themselves of the embarrassing Arab majority by buying up the Arab lands. Others asserted that, by flooding the country with Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe, the Arabs would soon find themselves in a minority. Then there was the argument that if a Zionist administration were kept in power by British bayonets for a few years, the Arabs, rather than submit to Jewish rule, would migrate. And there were certain extremists such as Israel Zangwill, who held that, if the Arabs refused to depart voluntarily, pressure should be employed to compel them to do so. In short, the Jews were to be the Chosen People in fact as well as in name, and those who were willing to submit to them, even though they had lived in Palestine as long and had equally valid claims to its soil, and traditions quite as ancient, were to be forced out of the country. A curious attitude of mind, surely!

It was, of course, perfectly clear that Great Britain could lend itself to no such schemes as these. To have expelled, or disfranchised, or "gently persuaded," or

politically coerced the 600,000 Moslems in Palestine would have elicited a roar of wrath from her millions of Mohammedan subjects in India and Africa and would have aroused the bitter hostility of the various Arab states—the Hedjaz, the Nejd, 'Iraq, Transjordania—which she was straining every endeavour to consolidate into a great Arab confederation under British domination. If forced to make a choice, she could far better afford to antagonize the Zionists, whose financial and moral support was no longer essential now that the war was won, than she could to make an enemy of a united and militant Islam.

But Great Britain had no desire to incur the ill will of either party if it could possibly be avoided. So, when the mandate for Palestine was assigned to her by the Supreme Council at San Remo, incorporated in the Treaty of Sèvres, and approved by the League of Nations, she essayed to steer a middle course by organizing an administration which would give the Jews the greatest measure of power possible without precipitating an open break with the Moslems. Her first step was to appoint as high commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, himself a Jew and a Zionist, a shrewd, experienced politician and an able, broad-minded man who had once held a portfolio in the Asquith cabinet. In order to give the Zionists a chance, the Samuel administration naturally had to take measures to curb the power of the Arab majority. In pursuance of this scheme it devised a legislative council, part of whose members were to be nominated by the high commissioner, the remainder to consist of ten "unofficial"

advisers—four Moslems, three Christians, and three Jews—who were to be elected. But the Arabs and the Christians refused to take part in the elections, so that it became necessary to abandon the plan for a legislative council in favour of one for an advisory council consisting only of nominated members. But this expedient proved equally ineffective, for, so violent was the Moslem opposition to the scheme for an advisory council, no Arab could be found who dared to serve on it. And to proceed with a council composed wholly of Jews would have been tantamount to inviting rebellion. At the moment, therefore, there exists a state of complete deadlock, the country being administered under a makeshift system of paternal government by the high commissioner, with such advisers as he can find, under the authority of a British order in council.

There are three parties to the Palestine controversy: the Arabs, who form four-fifths of the population of the country, who are closely bound by racial and religious ties to the Arabs of the adjacent regions, and who have behind them the powerful support of Islam; the Jews, who form barely one-fifteenth of the population of Palestine but who have behind them the force of enthusiasm of idealistic Jews in all lands and the vast financial and political influence of all Israel; and the British taxpayer, who is showing increasing reluctance to provide the men and money to conduct this experiment in government, which is costing him upward of ten million dollars a year.

Let it be clearly understood, now, that "Zionist" and "Jew" are by no means synonymous terms. In

fact, the grand rabbi of France has stated that there are only one hundred thousand Zionists in the world outside of the United States.[1] Basing my opinion on the comments of the Jewish press in various countries, and on my conversations with prominent Jews in America and abroad, I should say that Zionism finds its most ardent advocates among the downtrodden Jews of eastern Europe, who view with enthusiasm any prospect of escape from the oppression and wretched living conditions which they have endured for centuries. The bulk of the English Jews, who enjoy a far greater measure of political and financial influence than their coreligionists elsewhere, are also in favour of establishing in Palestine a modern Zion, though, as few of them would go there, they are actuated by idealistic rather than selfish reasons. The French Jews are, on the whole, opposed to Zionism, their attitude being influenced, no doubt, by French hostility toward the scheme. In the United States opinion is more evenly divided, many leading Hebrews being enthusiastic supporters of the Palestine experiment, while others, equally prominent, are unalterably opposed to it. I think the situation may be fairly summed up by saying that, though the Zionists form only a small minority of the Jewish people, they make up in enthusiasm and vociferousness what they lack in numbers. I do not wish to convey the impression, however, that, save in a few instances, the Zionist minority is actively opposed by the non-Zionist majority. Though the majority of the Jews may not approve of Zionist ambi-

[1] See "The New Map of Asia," by Herbert Adams Gibbons.

tions, which they regard as impractical and unwise, they are quite content to remain quietly on the side-lines as interested onlookers. They would be frankly astonished if the Zionists were to win the contest, but I imagine that they would applaud such a victory heartily.

Six years have now passed since the Balfour Declaration was issued, and five years since the close of the war, yet the Zionists appear to be as far from realizing their ambitions as ever. For this delay the rank and file of the movement place the blame on England, but many of the leaders are intelligent enough to recognise the extreme difficulty of England's position. They realize that, no matter how sincere she may be in her desire to carry out the pledge made by Mr. Balfour, she has no means of redeeming that pledge save by force, and force she will not employ. They have not blinded themselves to the fact that, barring the forcible expulsion of the Arabs, a measure which is obviously not to be seriously considered, there can be no hope of the Jews obtaining political control of Palestine until they are in a majority, or, at least, until they form a far stronger minority than at present.

Their proposed solution of the problem thus presented is, to say the least, an ingenious one and worthy of the race. They assert that if Great Britain will only consent to maintain order in the country and to keep the Arabs in check, they will bring in large sums of Jewish capital to be used in comprehensive development schemes, which include the extension of the railway system, the building of a great port at Haifa, and the

harnessing of the waters of the Jordan. By thus providing power, water, and transportation, agriculture, the only existing industry, would be greatly stimulated and new industries developed. There would also be created a considerable demand for labour, which would be met by the importation of large numbers of Jews from the countries of eastern Europe; and eventually, so the Zionists argue, Palestine, instead of supporting a population of some 700,000, could easily support three or four millions, the majority of whom would, of course, be Jews.

By way of inaugurating this ambitious scheme, the Zionists have already imported some thousands of immigrants from Rumania, Galicia, and the border states which formerly belonged to the Russian Empire—Poland, Ukrainia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the rest. A considerable number of these were found to be tainted with Bolshevism, though it is only fair to add that the Bolshevist Jews who have attempted to introduce Soviet doctrines into Palestine have met with scant success. The Zionists have, nevertheless, been careless in their selection of immigrants, their labour policy of bringing immigrants into the country before there is land or employment for them has been a hasty and impractical one, and it has only resulted in enhancing the Arabs' suspicion that the Zionists aim at early political domination of the country. Nor does the native Jew relish the idea of having Palestine, which yields none too good a living under the best conditions, invaded by a horde of his needy coreligionists from eastern Europe. When I was in Palestine last

year the story was being told in the British messes of the action of the exceedingly prosperous Jewish fruit-growers on the shores of Galilee, who, threatened by an influx of immigrants whom they did not want, adopted precisely the same methods employed by the fruit-growers of California to rid themselves of the I.W.W.'s. In addition to founding colonies composed of these poor European Jews, enterprising Zionists have obtained industrial concessions of one kind and another, the most important of these being the concession obtained by a Russian Jew named Rutenberg, who was one of Kerensky's lieutenants, for electrifying the towns of the Holy Land. But this pioneer concessionaire quickly found himself confronted by the same obstacle which is likely to be generally employed henceforward to block the path of all Jewish enterprises in Palestine, an Arab boycott. With his plant completed, his mains laid, and his power ready for distribution, he suddenly discovered that no Moslem would use it. "Switch off, Effendi," was the significant advice which he received from the Arab sheikhs.

This brings us to a consideration of the rights of the second great party to the controversy, the Arab population. Now the term "Arab," in its Palestinian sense, does not imply a half-savage nomad like the Bedouin, though the Zionists would like the world to retain that impression. There are Bedouins in the country, it is true, but they form only a small minority of the Arab population. The term "Arab" really applies to the industrious, peaceable native peasantry, the *fellaheen,* which are in the main of Semitic stock, though they

have sprung from three distinct families of that race: the ancient Canaanites, who entered Palestine twenty-five hundred years before the Crucifixion; the Arameans, who arrived about the same time as Israel; and Arabs who have drifted and still drift in from the desert, gradually passing from herding to tillage, from tents to houses, from encampments to permanent villages. To assert, therefore, as do the Zionists, that "Palestine is the national home of the Jewish people and of no other people" is to show an amazing disregard for the facts of history. For, when all is said and done, it is the Moslem peasantry—the Arabs, if you choose so to call them—who, by virtue of having for centuries lived and laboured on the soil, form the basis of the people and the state.[1]

And what of the Christian communities? Have they no rights worthy of consideration? Though their religion is younger than Judaism, their history is as ancient as that of the Jews, from which stock most of them originally sprang. Is not Palestine the birthplace of their faith also, and are not its fields and hills as sacred to them as to their Jewish neighbours? Has Christianity "made no history" and "left no image of its spirit" on the Holy Land? Were not the Crusaders, who, for over a century and a quarter, sought to wrest the Holy Land from the Moslems, Christians? Was not the army which eventually made possible the dream of a Jewish home in Palestine a Christian army?

The case of the opposition is, briefly, that if Palestine

[1] For a more extended discussion of this subject see "Syria and the Holy Land," by the Very Rev. Sir George Adam Smith.

is to have a government of its own, the form and composition of that government should be determined by the majority of the inhabitants in accordance with that doctrine of self-determination which the Allies have proclaimed over and over again. The fact that there are millions of Jews scattered over the face of the earth, many of them wealthy, educated, and influential, does not strengthen the Jewish claim to political domination in Palestine, for few of them have the slightest intention of settling there. Nothing can be plainer, then, than that the Jews, as a hopeless minority, cannot possibly erect a Jewish state in Palestine unless they are given a privileged political position, at variance with all the axioms of democracy and prejudical to the inherent political rights of the vast majority of the inhabitants. And these latter, whether Moslems or Christians, have not the slightest intention of committing political suicide by acceding to the Jewish plan. They assert, and with considerable justification, that the Jew is not by nature an agriculturist, and that even in the agricultural colonies which he has established his idea of working is to sit back and watch the Arab labourers do the actual cultivation. I might mention, however, that as an agricultural financier the Jew has given alarming evidence of his ability to acquire ownership of the soil. It is this steady acquision of the land, combined with the prospect of unlimited Jewish immigration from other countries, which has aroused the opposition of the Moslems and the Christians, who realize that whereas at present they have the advantage

of numbers, a situation might eventually be created when they would find themselves completely swamped in a Jewish ocean. Making common cause, therefore, because threatened by a common peril, they have boycotted and rendered completely ineffective the system of government which Great Britain has endeavoured to introduce in an attempt to fulfil, in part at least, the promise made to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration.[1]

After a painstaking study of the situation from every angle, I have become convinced—and I believe that my conviction is shared by the majority of the British army officers and non-Jewish officials in Palestine—that the extreme Zionist programme of a wholesale Jewish immigration, looking finally to making the country distinctly a Jewish state, can only be carried out by force of arms, for nothing is more certain than that the non-Jewish population of Palestine—nearly nine-tenths of the whole—will resist the political judification of the country by every means in their power. To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial, political, and social pressure to surrender the land, would not only be a gross violation of the spirit of the mandate, but it would almost certainly precipitate a revolt of the non-Jewish elements of the population, who, in such an event, could have for the asking the active assistance of the great Arab rulers of the hinterland.

Now, the last thing on earth that Britain desires is to offend or antagonize the Arabs who dwell without the borders of Palestine; for on their confidence, friend-

[1] See the articles "Some Truths about Palestine" in the London "Times," April 3-11, 1922.

ship, and co-operation depends, as I have already pointed out, the success of her ambitious scheme for the creation of a great Arab confederation, which, if realized, would link the British holdings in Africa with those in Middle Asia and would give her a clear run of land from Calcutta to the Cape of Good Hope. By glancing at the map you will see that, from a military standpoint, Palestine occupies a most unfortunate situation. Immediately to the south, and separated from Palestine by no defensible frontier, stretches the kingdom of the Hedjaz, whose ruler, King Hussein, has persistently laid claim to political suzerainty over all those lands, including Palestine and Syria, in which the Arabs form a majority of the population. To the eastward, separated from Palestine only by the narrow waters of the Jordan, lies the emirate of Kerak—or Transjordania, as it was formerly called—whose ruler, the Emir Abdullah, is a son of King Hussein and a brother of King Feisal of 'Iraq, whose kingdom lies still further to the eastward. And to the north, beyond the Samarian hills, is Syria, likewise with an overwhelming Arab population, whose French administration looks with anything but friendly eyes on the Zionist manœuvres in Palestine. Thus it will be seen that the proposed Jewish state is hemmed in on three sides by Arab territories whose populations are heartily in sympathy with the plight of their fellow-Moslems in Palestine and correspondingly hostile to the Zionists. The Zionists find themselves menaced, therefore, not only by the 600,000 Arabs in Palestine itself, but by

millions of other Arabs, far less susceptible to outside pressure, dwelling along their borders.

For nearly five years the British have been striving to negotiate a treaty with King Hussein, by which, in return for British support of an Arab confederation under his suzerainty, he would agree to abstain from interference with Zionist schemes in Palestine. In the spring of 1923 a draft was at length agreed upon which it was hoped would prove acceptable to the Arabs and which, so the Zionists were assured, would be innocuous to them. With the intention of placating the latter, who were bringing strong pressure to bear on the British Government to take more definite steps than it had yet done toward establishing Jewish rule in Palestine, an advance official summary of the document was published in Jerusalem. But, far from having the desired effect, it not only aroused Zionist suspicions but it also precipitated a storm of protests from the Arabs. The text of Article II, which caused the trouble, ran as follows:

> His Britannic Majesty undertakes to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in 'Iraq and Trans-Jordan and in the Arab states of the Arabian Peninsula, exclusive of Aden. As regards Palestine, His Britannic Majesty already has undertaken that nothing will be done in that country which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arab community. In the event of the governments of any or all of these territories expressing the desire to enter into an association for customs or other purposes with a view to eventual confederation, His Britannic Majesty will, if requested to do so by the parties concerned, use

his good offices to further their desires. His Hashimite Majesty recognises the special position of His Britannic Majesty in 'Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine, and undertakes that in such matters as come within the influence of His Hashimite Majesty concerning these countries he will do his best to co-operate with His Britannic Majesty in the fulfilment of his obligations.

This clearly indicates that British policy aims at the creation of an Arab confederation, an idea displeasing to the Turks in Angora, to the French in Damascus, to the Zionists in Palestine, and to Ibn Sa'ud in Nejd, whose opposition counts more than all the others put together. Though the Hashimite triumvirate, Hussein, Feisal, and Abdullah, naturally favour the erection, under the Ægis of Britain, of an Arab confederation, for the very excellent reason that it would serve to steady their somewhat shaky thrones, they distinctly disapprove of the provision in the proposed treaty requiring King Hussein to recognise the British position in Palestine, which country they have always insisted must eventually form part of such a confederation. Hence Hussein has refused to sign the treaty, because he asserts that to do so would be equivalent to an indorsement of Zionism. The Zionists have been likewise seriously perturbed by the proposal, for they are convinced that the safety of a struggling Jewish state would be gravely menaced by the consolidation of the various Arab elements which surround it. So no one is satisfied, every one is suspicious, and there for the moment the matter stands.

There is still a third party to the Palestine controversy whose rights, which have hitherto been overlooked,

must henceforward be taken into consideration. I refer to the British taxpayer. Palestine is an inexpensive luxury compared with Mesopotamia, but it is nevertheless costing him in the neighbourhood of ten million dollars a year. No wonder that there is for ever ringing in his ears Kipling's exhortation to

> Pass the hat for your credit's sake
> And pay, pay, pay!

The Palestinian occupation is also costing the lives of British soldiers; for incidents, insignificant enough in themselves but frequently resulting in bloodshed, are constantly occurring. There are, moreover, vast potentialities of trouble. And England, Heaven knows, already has enough troubles elsewhere on her hands. Hence there is a steadily growing sentiment in England in favour of withdrawing from Palestine and leaving the Zionists and the Arabs to settle the affair as best they can. Organs as influential as the London "Daily Express" and the London "Daily Mail" have urged the Government to hand back the mandate to the League of Nations and evacuate the country without further delay. Others suggest that if it is necessary to maintain British garrisons in Palestine in order to prevent the wholesale massacre of the Jews by the now incensed Arab population, the whole cost of the occupation should be defrayed by international Jewry.

It may be asked why, if the experiment is proving so costly and so dangerous, it is not abandoned. The answer is that it is continued because a clique of British

imperialists, few in numbers but extremely influential in the councils of the Government, are supporting the Zionist movement in order to carry out their cherished scheme for British hegemony in western Asia. This is the same clique which was behind the Mesopotamian adventure described in a preceding chapter, and which has hitherto baulked all attempts to effect an evacuation of that region. Some at least of the men who form this clique are interested in Mesopotamian oil, and, consequently, in a plan to bring that oil to the Mediterranean by means of a railway and pipe-line from the great refineries at Abadan, near Baghdad, across the Syrian Desert to Haifa, on the coast of Palestine. If that plan can be realized it will not only enable British tankers and war-ships to take on Mesopotamian oil without leaving the Mediterranean, but it will provide Britain with an "all red" rail route to the Middle East, thereby recompensing her in some measure for her failure to gain control of the Baghdad Railway, the greater part of which is again in Turkish hands. It will be obvious, therefore, that the success of this scheme depends upon the retention of British troops in Palestine. If they are withdrawn in deference to public clamour, the plan for a Mediterranean-Mesopotamian railway must be abandoned. If, on the other hand, Zionist influence is strong enough to prevent such evacuation, there are good reasons for believing that the railway and pipe-line will become realities, to the great satisfaction of the British imperialists and the great profit of the British oil-men, which explains why both of these extremely influential groups strongly

support the Zionists, though for widely different reasons.

In addition to arousing the suspicion and resentment of the Arabs, Britain's policy in Palestine has sensibly embittered the Anglo-French misunderstanding. This is not generally recognised, I think, because most onlookers have failed to realize the extent and nature of France's interests in the Near East. These go back for upward of eight hundred years, to the days of the Crusades, the first attempt to free the Holy Land being led by a French noble, Godfrey de Bouillon; the second by Louis VII, King of France. In the last year of the eighteenth century another French soldier, Napoleon Bonaparte, made a third attempt to conquer Palestine. France was likewise the pioneer among European nations in the Land of the Valley of the Nile. Her sons laid the cultural and economic foundations of modern Egypt. That indomitable engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, who drove his spade through the sands of Suez, was a Frenchman. For almost four centuries the guardianship of the Holy Places and the protection of Christians in the Ottoman dominions have been jealously guarded prerogatives of France. It was primarily to prevent French influence at Jerusalem from being replaced by Russian that France entered the Crimean War and it was in her traditional rôle of protector of the Christians that France invaded Syria in 1860. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Levant has long been within the Gallic cultural sphere, the French language being almost universally used by the educated classes in all the lands bordering the eastern

end of the Mediterranean. In view of these facts, it is easy to understand how bitter was the resentment of France, a great Catholic nation, when she saw the Holy Land, to which she was bound by so many ties of tradition, sentiment, and religion, pass to the control of a Protestant power, Great Britain.

Nothing is more certain than that the affairs of Palestine are fast approaching a crisis. The attempt to give the country a limited measure of autonomy has failed. The present dictatorship—for that is what it amounts to—satisfies no one. The British high commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, has asked his Government for greater powers, but they have been refused him, and it is generally understood that he is willing to give up the thankless task in despair. Zionism, which appeared to be such a harmless programme when the Lloyd George Government gave it its approval in 1917, now finds itself in the gravest difficulties. The native Moslem element is becoming increasingly restless and hostile, the Arabs of Transjordania are in an ugly mood, and the clamour of the British taxpayer that the whole enterprise be abandoned daily becomes more insistent. Looking toward the future, it seems to me that the relations between Jew and Moslem are not likely to improve until the moderate elements of Jewry replace the extremists who are at present in control of Zionist activities in Palestine, and until the Zionists make it unmistakably clear that, in working for a national home for the Jews, they are *not* working for ultimate Jewish political control of the Holy Land.

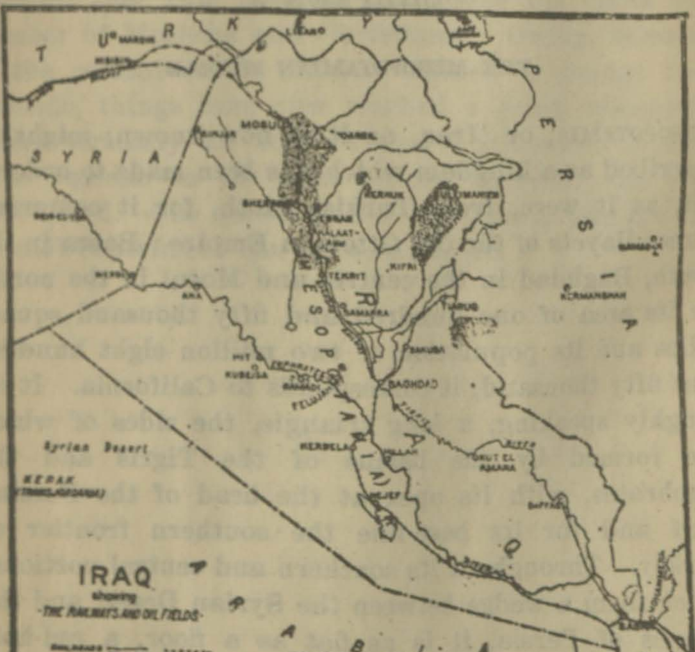
No fair-minded person will deny that the Jews have a right to establish a national home in the land of their fathers, but that does not mean that 80,000 Jews have a right to impose their rule, no matter how just and tolerant that rule may be, on nearly ten times that number of Moslems and Christians. Owing, however, to the refusal of the Zionist leaders to change their attitude, things have now reached a point, unhappily, where virtually all hope of the experiment's meeting with success, in the near future at least, has been abandoned. The question now is, indeed, whether the Zionist experiment can be saved at all.

CHAPTER X

THE MESOPOTAMIAN MUDDLE

MESOPOTAMIA, or 'Iraq, as it is now known, might be described as a kingdom which has been made to order—cut, as it were, from Turkish cloth, for it comprises three vilayets of the old Ottoman Empire: Basra in the south, Baghdad in the centre, and Mosul in the north. In its area of one hundred and fifty thousand square miles and its population of two million eight hundred and fifty thousand, it corresponds to California. It is, roughly speaking, a long triangle, the sides of which are formed by the basins of the Tigris and the Euphrates, with its apex at the head of the Persian Gulf and for its base-line the southern frontier of Turkey. Throughout its southern and central portions, which form a wedge between the Syrian Desert and the steppes of Persia, it is as flat as a floor, a red-hot, sandy waste with narrow zones of cultivation bordering the rivers; but in the north, above Mosul, it lifts into the wild mountains of Kurdistan. In this region meet three strong elements of Islam—the Arabs, the Turks, and the Kurds, both Turkish and Persian—and it is the conflicting ambitions of these, plus the hostility of all three to non-Moslem rule, which has produced what

someone has aptly described as "the Mesopotamian muddle." The importance of the country lies not in its geographic situation, for it is not on any imperial lines of communication, but in its oil-fields, which are believed to be among the richest in the world, and, to a



lesser extent, in its control of the southern sections of the Baghdad Railway, which, when connected will form a highway of steel extending from the Turkish frontier to the head of the Persian Gulf, a distance of nearly a thousand miles.

Great Britain's claims to Mesopotamia rest solely on conquest; prior to 1914 she had no interests there worthy of the name. An Anglo-Indian expeditionary force captured most of the country during the Great War in the face of stubborn Turko-German resistance, Basra being occupied on November 22, 1914, and Baghdad on March 11, 1917. By the Treaty of Sèvres Mesopotamia, or 'Iraq, to give it its official name, was recognised as an "independent" state, though its "independence" was qualified by placing it under a mandatory power, the mandate being assigned to Great Britain.

Let it be clearly understood, now, that the people of Mesopotamia were tricked and deceived from the very beginning of the British occupation. In the proclamation issued by General Maude upon his entry into Baghdad he asserted eloquently that "we come not as conquerors but as liberators," though he refrained from committing himself as to the future of the country. But the Anglo-French Declaration of November, 1918, was more explicit, for it unequivocally pledged "the complete and definitive liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations."

That pledge has not been kept. On the contrary, the people of Mesopotamia have been forced to accept as their king an alien, belonging to another creed, whom they neither knew nor trusted; and a form of government which they did not want, and which is maintained

only by British bayonets, was imposed upon them. They were given the same "free choice" as that accorded to the Moors under the French protectorate or to the peoples of India under the British raj. To assert, then, that 'Iraq is an "independent kingdom" is to take unwarranted liberties with the truth.

The scheme for placing Feisal on the throne of 'Iraq originated with the school of pan-Arab enthusiasts which had risen in England during the war. For, just as Germany had her Gaelic scholars who genuinely believed in the possibility of creating an Irish republic, and her Orientalists who were convinced that Indian unrest could be fanned into open rebellion, so England had her pan-Arab party, the members of which dreamed of a great Arab empire carved from the flanks of Turkey. Though the plans of the pan-Arabists suffered a severe set-back when the French summarily ejected Feisal from Syria, of which country he had first sought to make himself king, they did not despair; for they still had a vacant throne at their disposal in Mesopotamia, and on that throne they determined to place their protégé. That Feisal had never set feet in Mesopotamia, and that he was a member of the Sunni branch of Mohammedanism, which detests the Shiahs, who form the great majority of the population, as heartily as the Irish Catholics detest the Ulster-men, made no difference to the enthusiasts who supported him. It was enough that he was an Arab and that, presumably, he would prove a willing tool of England's.

In 1920 there occurred in Mesopotamia an Arab revolt which cost many British lives and which very

nearly resulted in the capture of Baghdad by the insurgents. Shortly thereafter the British high commissioner, Sir Arnold Wilson, was succeeded by Sir Percy Cox, an Anglo-Indian official who had spent the greater part of his life as a political agent in the lands bordering on the Persian Gulf and who was known to the Arabs from Oman to Anatolia as "Cokkos." From the day he entered upon his new duties, Sir Percy Cox, who understood the Arab character and sympathized with Arab ambitions, pledged himself to support the policy of self-determination for the people of Mesopotamia, as enunciated in the Anglo-French Declaration, thus securing for himself the confidence and co-operation of the most influential section of Arab opinion in the country, the leader of which was a venerable and highly respected dignitary, the Nakib of Baghdad. The first step taken by Sir Percy was the formation of a provisional government, the premiership of which he offered to the Nakib, who accepted it on the distinct understanding that an electoral law would immediately be passed and that no time would be lost in convening a national assembly with full powers to draw up a constitution. The portfolio of minister of the interior was accepted by Seyyid Talib, the leading notable of Basra and an extremely astute and ambitious politician, second only to the Nakib in influence, on the same understanding. It should be added that the British were under the greatest obligations to Talib, who, during the rebellion of 1920, had answered their appeals for help by coming to the aid of the beleaguered garrison of Baghdad, thereby saving British arms and

prestige from serious disaster. At this time it was generally admitted by close students of the political situation that, were Mesopotamia permitted to choose its own ruler, as the Allies had promised, the choice of the people would lie between the Nakib and Seyyid Talib, with the chances in favour of the former.

Under the just and sympathetic administration of Sir Percy Cox, everything pointed toward an early and satisfactory solution of the vexatious Mesopotamian problem, with the natives permitted to work out their own salvation as they saw fit; but when, as a result of a shake-up in the cabinet in London, Mr. Winston Churchill became secretary of state for the colonies, the policy of the British Government was abruptly altered. (It is worthy of remark, by the way, that the conduct of Mesopotamian affairs was intrusted to the colonial secretary, whereas, if the country was really independent, as the British claimed, they presumably would have been dealt with by the secretary for foreign affairs.) One of the first moves made by Mr. Churchill was the creation of a new division in the Colonial Office, known as the Middle Eastern Department, of which Colonel Thomas E. Lawrence, the brilliant young Orientalist who had served as Feisal's chief of staff during the Arabian campaign, was appointed adviser on Arab affairs. And he was ably seconded by a remarkable woman, Miss Gertrude Lowthian Bell, an author, Oriental authority, and explorer, who has held the post of assistant political officer at Baghdad since 1917. Thus the pan-Arab party was ably represented in the government councils both at home and in 'Iraq. No

sooner were the pan-Arabists firmly in the saddle than the Mesopotamian policy of the Government underwent an abrupt change, though it is only fair to say that of this change in policy Sir Percy Cox for a considerable time remained in ignorance. His awakening came in 1921, when he was summoned to attend a conference on Arab affairs at Cairo. This conference, which was dominated by the arrogant and aggressive personality of Mr. Churchill, who, always an ardent imperialist, had espoused, heart and soul, the pan-Arab movement, decided, despite the protests of Sir Percy Cox, that Feisal should be placed upon the throne of Mesopotamia. Sir Percy thereupon found himself in a most embarrassing position and open to charges of bad faith, for it quickly became evident that Mr. Churchill and his supporters had not the slightest intention of carrying out the promises which "Cokkos" had made in all sincerity to the people of 'Iraq. In vain he pleaded that the British Government was in honour bound to fulfil its pledges; he received the answer that imperial policy could not be subordinated to the whims of the Arabs, who were, after all, a backward people who did not know their own minds. Quickly realizing that this line of argument was unavailing, Sir Percy then pointed out that if Ibn Sa'ud, the emir of Nejd-Hasa and the most powerful ruler in Arabia, who had always been loyal to England, was thus encircled by three of his hereditary enemies—Hussein in the Hedjaz, Abdullah in Transjordania, and Feisal in 'Iraq—his position would be dangerous in the extreme, and that it was doubtful if such a policy would be quietly

accepted by the Wahabi ruler, who was in a position to make things extremely uncomfortable for the British and their Shereefian protégés. But this argument was likewise brushed aside by the Churchill faction, which asserted that Ibn Sa'ud's neutrality could easily be purchased with British gold. So there was nothing left for Sir Percy but to resign or to accept the new policy with the best grace possible. He chose the latter alternative.

Now, it was common knowledge that, if the promised elections were held, Feisal would stand about as much chance as an icicle in Hades, for he was personally unknown to the people of Mesopotamia, he belonged to a sect which most of them fervently detested, he came from a family which was in distinctly bad odour throughout the Moslem world because of the exhortations it had long practised on the Mecca pilgrims, and the 'Iraquians believed, with excellent reason, that he was nothing but a puppet controlled by England. So it was decided that he should be made king out of hand, as it were, without the formality of obtaining the people's consent, which, as every one knew, would not be forthcoming. Accordingly, in June, 1921, Feisal embarked on a British cruiser at Jiddah, the port of Mecca, for his new dominions, though the British refrained from publishing the fact.

But news travels in the East like fire in dry grass, and scarcely had the young emir set foot on the *Northbrook's* deck before the rumour was being spread through the bazaars and coffee-houses of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul that the British were bringing him to

Mesopotamia with the intention of imposing him upon the Mesopotamians as king whether they wanted him or not, and that the general elections, so solemnly promised by Sir Percy Cox, had been abandoned. These rumours soon reached the ears of the Nakib and of Seyyid Talib, who hastened to the British Residency for enlightenment, only to be assured by the high commissioner that their fears were groundless and that Mesopotamia would be permitted the free choice of its ruler, as had been promised over and over again. But Seyyid Talib, more sceptical than his colleague the Nakib, became suspicious of British good faith. He not only harboured suspicions but he voiced them, for, at a dinner given in his own house, his tongue loosened by wine, he declared that the people of Mesopotamia would never accept Feisal as their ruler and denounced as traitors to the Mesopotamian Government which employed them certain British officials who had been active in the emir's behalf. In the Orient even the walls of one's own house have ears, and, as might have been expected, Talib's remarks were promptly repeated to the British authorities, losing nothing, it is to be presumed, in the telling. But, though highly indiscreet, by no stretch of the imagination could they have been construed as seditious, for Talib was a minister in a Government supposed to be independent, and as such had every right to express his political opinions. But Mesopotamia was *not* independent. On the contrary it was, in everything save name, a British possession, and those who were charged with the execution of Britain's plans had no intention of tolerating anything

which savoured of obstruction. No matter what his personal opinions as to the justice and wisdom of these plans may have been, Sir Percy Cox was, after all, bound to carry out the orders of his Government, and this he proceeded to do by assuming the powers of a dictator and ruthlessly stamping out all opposition. Well aware of the popularity and influence enjoyed by Talib, and of the obstacle which he might prove to a realization of the scheme, he determined to remove him. To achieve this end he employed a method which might have been expected of an Oriental despot or a Mexian dictator but seemed strange indeed for the representative of the British Empire, which, as Lord Curzon once modestly asserted, if I remember rightly, "is, under God, the greatest influence for civilization the world has ever seen."

It so happened that Seyyid Talib had been invited by Lady Cox—who had doubtless, been kept in ignorance of the plot—to take tea with her at the Residency. Sir Percy himself was conveniently absent at the Baghdad races. When the unsuspecting minister, having taken leave of his hostess, emerged in his car from the Residency gate, he found the road, which at this point is very narrow and little frequented effectually blocked by an army truck. As his car came to a halt he was placed under arrest by a British intelligence officer and a squad of soldiers, and, almost before he realized what was happening, he found himself on a special train bound for Basra, where a destroyer was in waiting to carry him to Ceylon, which Britain uses as a Bastille for those Orientals who dare to oppose her imperial

will. Thus fell a minister in Mesopotamia's first cabinet, a man who had taught himself English, whose two sons were at school in England, and who, by coming to the assistance of the British when they were in desperate need, saved thousands of British lives. Modern history is marred by few baser examples of ingratitude and bad faith. That is why those who are familiar with the true story of Britain's Mesopotamian policy could not suppress a smile of cynicism when they read the published reports of Lord Curzon's pious protestations at Lausanne that England would never consent to surrender the Mosul district (with its oil-fields) because to do so would be to break the solemn pledges she had given to the Arabs and to imperil British honour!

Intimidation was what the British aimed at, and the arrest of Talib had the desired effect, for the venerable Nakib was terrified, and Mesopotamia trembled. On the other hand, it only served still further to embitter the people against Feisal, who, when he landed at Basra a few weeks later, received a welcome so cold that it would have chilled an Eskimo. And during his carefully stage-managed tour to the holy cities of Nejif and Kerbela, which his British sponsors had counted on making a sort of triumphal progress, he was met by stony silence. Yet, with the removal of Talib, around whom any organized opposition to Feisal would have rallied, it was an easy matter for the British, backed by the army of occupation and with the whole administration of the country under their control, to

force the Hashimite prince on 'Iraq. It was the opinion of many well informed men at this time that 'Iraq, if permitted freely to express its choice, would almost certainly have voted for a republican form of government, which was the last thing the pan-Arabists wanted or could permit. But, though they did not dare to risk a popular election, which they knew full well would be unfavourable to them, neither were they prepared to affront public opinion, particularly the opinion of the Moslem world, by denying the Mesopotamians an opportunity to manifest their choice; so they compromised by holding a mock plebiscite, the leading sheikhs and notables being asked whether they would accept Feisal for their constitutional ruler. This plebiscite was, of course, only a sham, a cloak to cover the real intentions of the conspirators, who fully intended to put through their scheme no matter how great the opposition. The sheikhs and the notables were perfectly aware, therefore, that the cards were stacked against them. They knew that if they voted against Feisal they would stand an excellent chance of meeting the same fate which had overtaken Talib, and, even if they escaped immediate exile, Feisal, once he came into power, would see to it that their political careers, if not their lives, came to an abrupt ending. So no one voted in the negative, though every one thought it, and the British authorities announced, with much éclat, that Feisal was the choice of the people, and lost no time in enthroning him as king. The scheme succeeded, as such unscrupulous schemes usually succeed if there are sufficient power and ruthlessness behind them, but one

is led to wonder, in view of present conditions, if it was worth while, for Feisal, though kept on his throne by British bayonets, has caused great irritation to the British Government by refusing to perform as a well trained puppet should; Arab confidence in British sincerity and good faith has been completely shattered; and that "honour" of which British statesmen are for ever prating has been indelibly stained.[1]

In order to lend colour to its oft-repeated assertions that the new state is not, as has been claimed, merely a unit of the British Empire, the Government of Great Britain, on October 10, 1922, signed a treaty with the Government of 'Iraq. Though British officials declare that this treaty represents a first step toward the granting of self-government to the people of Mesopotamia, the text shows conclusively that Great Britain will continue to exercise a very large degree of control; so large, in fact, that the independence of the new kingdom is purely nominal.

In signing this treaty, says the London "Times," "the Government have linked up the fortunes of the British Empire with all the uncertainties in Mesopotamia for twenty years to come. . . . At the end of the war we found 'Iraq upon our hands and our Government agreed to accept a mandate for the adminstration of this inhospitable territory. What

[1] For the benefit of those who may criticize this account of the Feisal conspiracy as being biased and anti-British, I might mention that it is drawn wholly from British sources, particularly from "The Mesopotamian Mystery" articles which appeared in the London "Times.

relation 'Iraq has to British imperial interests, whether strategic or economic, no statesman has yet made plain. The strongest argument ever used for the continuance of our connection with the country is that, since we have expended so much money in the effort to wrest the country from the Turks and to retain our control, it would be a confession of weakness if we were to relax the strain. The task since the Armistice has been wholly ungrateful. The population rebelled and the rebellion was crushed at great cost. More recently our Government have tried to act on the assumption that the people of Mesopotamia were, or could be made, a definite and coherent nationality. Since their speech is Arabic, they were given an Arab king from the family of the Sherif of Mecca, and the person of the king has been regarded as a possible nucleus of stable government. The king was provided with a cabinet and Mesopotamia, with its vague frontiers and mixed population, was treated as a nation, as an embryo state, to be ranked with the modern democracies included under the League of Nations."

The whole proceeding is "thoroughly artificial" according to "The Times," which adds:

The Treaty is an evasion of the facts. The reason for a conclusion of a treaty was that the politicians of Baghdad objected to the idea of a mandate, and traded on popular ignorance by objecting to a novel Arabic term. Our Government, therefore, considered itself as obliged to incorporate the normal provisions of a mandate in a treaty recognising the independence of 'Iraq. By this treaty, however, the British Empire undertakes many and serious obligations toward Mesopotamia be-

sides considerable obligations towards the League of Nations. The obligations of military and financial aid are on our side; on the side of King Feisal there is little more than an obligation to accept our advice and to refrain from accepting foreign advisers without our consent. The Treaty is unfair to the British Empire, which has always willingly undertaken an intelligible task, but shrinks from undefinable commitments. It is unfair to the League of Nations, which in the present experimental stage should not be saddled with a burden that the British Empire can hardly bear.

The demand that Britain extricate herself from the Mesopotamian muddle, that she wash her hands of the whole troublesome affair by evacuating 'Iraq and leaving the people of that country to form their own government and paddle their own canoe, has been steadily growing louder, especially in British Labour circles, ever since the Armistice. The case of those who favour withdrawal rests on three grounds—economic, military, and political. It is argued, in the first place, that 'Iraq is, under post-war financial conditions, a luxury which Britain simply cannot afford, it being estimated that British expenditure on the country from the Armistice to the spring of 1923 has amounted, in round numbers, to seven hundred and fifty million dollars. To meet the expenses of government, Great Britain raised by taxation from the people of 'Iraq approximately twenty-five million dollars from a population of two million eight hundred and fifty thousand, which works out at about nine dollars a head, whereas in India the average taxation amounts to less than one dollar per person. In 'Iraq, there-

fore, the British administration has violated Lord Cromer's dictum that low taxation is a *sine qua non* for the successful government by a European power of an Eastern people. The Arab revolt of 1920 was, indeed, largely due to the discovery that liberation from the Turkish yoke and the establishment of an up-to-date government were costly luxuries for the taxpayer.

It is hardly to be contested that the British position in Mesopotamia is strategically bad. At least two great soldiers, Sir William Robertson and the late Sir Henry Wilson, have not hesitated to express that opinion, the former having remarked, "Most people condemn the Mesopotamian commitments on the ground of expense, but it is equally to be condemned on the ground of imperial security."

Mesopotamia is a sparsely settled country of immense spaces, a peculiarly trying climate, poor communications, a discontented native population, and perhaps two thousand miles of land frontier. Where the frontier runs among the hills of Kurdistan on the north and north-east, no one really knows. Wherever it is, the only thing clear is that British law does not run among the tribes of those wild and untamable hills. North-west there is no defensible line, particularly since the British position in Mesopotamia was weakened by the alteration in the Turko-Syrian frontier as a result of the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement, yet British outposts are stationed seven hundred and fifty miles from their base at Basra and nearly a hundred miles from the nearest rail-head. Military men assert that

the mountains of Mosul are defensible, adducing, in support of their argument, the fact that no invader has entered the country by that route since the days of Xenophon. Yet the fact remains that, should war break out between England and Turkey over the Mosul question, the former would find herself in a most precarious position. If the abandonment of Mosul was rendered imperative by a sudden thrust from the North —and no one who is acquainted with the situation believes for a moment that England could concentrate sufficient troops in that region quickly enough to resist a determined Turkish offensive—the Baghdad province, which lies down in the plains, would have to be abandoned as well. Give up Mosul and all the country down to the small Basra province at the head of the Persian Gulf must be evacuated, if, indeed, the inadequate forces now garrisoning the country, consisting of about six thousand British and Indian troops and some thirty-five hundred Assyrian levies, could effect such a withdrawal before disaster overtook them.

Mr. Churchill, when minister of war, contended that 'Iraq could be held at moderate cost by the Royal Air Force, and a number of air-squadrons were accordingly despatched there. Though these have been used to some extent in overawing recalcitrant sheikhs and in restoring order in outlying districts, their usefulness against highly mobile Arab forces appears to have been somewhat overrated. Airplanes are, moreover, no longer a novelty to the Arab, and, consequently, their initial moral effect is rapidly disappearing. The story is told of one sheikh who had forty bombs dropped

on his encampment, the only casualties being ten dead sheep, whereupon he sent word to the nearest British political officer that he would pay the Government the value of the sheep if the Government would pay him the value of the bombs. Another tale, doubtless equally apocryphal, is of a Bedouin chieftain who, after one of these bombing raids, informed the military authorities that "You have killed one wife and spoiled another, and I write to say that this sort of thing will not do."

There remains the possibility of a British withdrawal to Basra. Such a course would have certain distinct advantages, in that Basra could be held by sea-power; the province, being more thickly settled and more productive, would be self-supporting; it would serve as a *point d'appui* for British interests in the Persian Gulf; and, most important of all, millions of pounds would be saved to the British taxpayer. If, in withdrawing to Basra, the British could be certain that the balance of the country would be friendly, the plan might work, but it would be useless if there ensued a repetition of the situation which confronted the Greeks upon their occupation of Smyrna, when the economic life of the port was strangled by the hostility of the hinterland.

'Iraq, with hostile desert tribes on the south and west, with hostile Turks and hostile Kurds on the north, with a suspicious and unfriendly Persia on the east, and with a discontented and rebellious population, is a difficult country to hold, either in whole or part. For Britain to attempt to retain her grip on it by a military campaign in the heart of Asia, with the appalling cost in lives and money which such a campaign would entail,

would be little short of lunacy, as most military men are now willing to admit. The truth of the matter is, as Mr. Charles Roberts reminds the readers of "The Contemporary Review," that the British nation is an amphibious animal. It may at times get out upon the land, but its true home is in the sea, and in the case of 'Iraq it has ventured much too far from its natural element.

Nothing is more obvious than that, as long as Britain remains in 'Iraq, she will be bedevilled, irritated, exasperated by every form of political opposition even if she is not actually menaced by rebellion or invasion. 'Iraq is not a unity and never will be. Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra are jealous of each other if for no other reason than their conflicting economic interests; the Sunni element of the population detests the Shiahs, who reciprocate the feeling; the tribes hate each other and equally hate the Effendi class of the cities, which, in turn, has no sympathy with the desert dwellers; and a still further internal division was created by the 1920 rebellion, which set the sheikhs who stood by the British at that critical moment against those who did not. Moreover, the Arab hatred for the Turks is rapidly waning, the gulf which so long separated the two races having been bridged by Arab hatred of the policies pursued by the Allies, the Arabs claiming, and with justification, that Britain and France have given them nothing like the independence promised them. Thus there has been brought about what comes perilously near to a Turko-Arab *rapprochement*. The Turkish Nationalists have made it amply clear that

they harbour no territorial designs against the Arab lands, and the Arabs in turn, thus reassured, hailed the Nationalist victories with open or secret rejoicing as Moslem triumphs over the Christians. Though the suggestion would have been greeted with derision a few years ago, the belief is steadily gaining ground among those who are really familiar with the complexities of the situation that the day may not be far off when something in the nature of an alliance will be concluded between the Turks and the Arabs. Both peoples, remember, are suspicious of Anglo-French aims and ambitions in Western Asia, both resent even the suggestion of European control, and, though they have had no love for each other in the past, they are, after all, bound together by the ties of Islam. In any estimate of the Mesopotamian situation, therefore, the Turkish factor must be taken into consideration.[1]

Despite all the pious protestations of British statesmen, notably Lord Curzon, Great Britain is not spending millions in holding Mesopotamia so as to keep her pledges to the Arabs and the Kurds; she is remaining there because she covets the Mosul oil-fields, whose resources are estimated to be worth at least a billion dollars and to equal those of the entire United States.

Though British influence in Mesopotamia dates from the time when the agents of the old East India Company, after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, established themselves at the head of the Persian Gulf and in Baghdad, British interests in that region did not assume any considerable

[1] See article by Mr. C. H. Roberts in "The Contemporary Review" for April, 1923.

proportions until the beginning of the present century, when both British and Germans began their world-wide quest for "liquid gold." In 1900, or thereabouts, German interests secured from the Turkish Government several oil concessions in the Mosul district. But, when the Turks discovered that the Teutons had deceived them as to the real value of these concessions, their anger was aroused, and they began systematically to obstruct German operations by granting to their British rivals conflicting concessions. Shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, however, a compromise between the two groups was effected by the formation of the Turkish Petroleum Company, in which three-quarters of the stock was held by British interests and one quarter by the Germans. The details of a comprehensive concession to this company were approved by the Turkish minister of finance, but, owing to the outbreak of the war, the grant was never ratified by the Turkish Parliament. Keep that fact clearly in mind, for it is on this *unratified* concession that the British to-day base all their claims to Mosul oil.

By the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, as I have explained elsewhere, the Mosul district was assigned to France. But after their conquest of Mesopotamia, the British must have come to a sudden realization of the immense potential value of this region, just as the war had brought them to a realization of the imperative necessity to the British fleet of possessing an ample supply of oil, for in 1918 Lloyd George persuaded Clemenceau to turn the Mosul district over to the British, in return for which he agreed to support French

claims in Syria. But during the Peace Conference a misunderstanding arose between the two allies over this agreement, the French maintaining that they had surrendered Mosul on the understanding that they were to receive a share of its oil, while the British claimed that it had been given to them unconditionally. To settle this controversy the Allies held a conference at San Remo in the spring of 1920, when it was agreed that England should receive the mandate for Mesopotamia but that France should inherit the quarter interest in the Turkish Petroleum Company formerly held by the Germans, or in other words 25 per cent of the net output of the Mosul fields.

It was at this point that the United States suddenly injected herself into the affair by protesting that the oil settlement effected at San Remo was a defiance of America's principle of the "open door." In proof of her contention she cited Article 7 of the San Remo Agreement, which provides that "in the event of a private petroleum company being used to develop the Mesopotamian fields the British Government will place at the disposal of the French Government a share of twenty-five per cent in such company," thus showing indubitably that England intended to maintain a monopoly of the Mosul fields, though she had consented to give a share in the output to France.

It should also be emphasized that the title of the Turkish Petroleum Company is by no means unclouded; for an American, Rear-Admiral Colby Chester, claims to hold a concession which covers the same territory and which is dated three years earlier. In an earlier

chapter I have related how, for a number of years prior to the war, Admiral Chester had been negotiating with the Ottoman Government relative to concessions of various kinds in Anatolia, Armenia, and Mesopotamia, and how, in June, 1911—three years before the formation of the Turkish Petroleum Company—an agreement, which came to be known as the Chester Concession, was submitted to the Turkish Parliament but remained unratified by that body owing to the outbreak of the Turko-Italian War. Thus neither the Turkish Petroleum Company nor the Chester interests have a clear title to the Mosul fields, though the American claim, as I have shown, antedates the Anglo-French one by three years.

Throughout the summer of 1920 a lively and at times acrimonious correspondence was carried on between the Department of State and Downing Street over the question of Mesopotamian oil, the secretary of state, Bainbridge Colby, vigorously protesting against the oil agreement as drawn up at San Remo and against the exclusion of American oil interests from those regions (Mesopotamia and Palestine) for which Great Britain had been made the mandatory. It was a curious and complicated situation and clearly illustrates England's determination to prevent the United States, which had so lavishly aided her during the war with men and money, from sharing in the fruits of the victory if she could possibly do so. The mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine, as originally drafted, prohibited discrimination against "the nationals of any State, member of the League of Nations . . . in

matters concerning taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or in the treatment of ships or aircraft." Note carefully the joker in that provision: *"any State, member of the League of Nations."* For the United States was not a member of the League. It will be seen, therefore, that there was nothing in the wording of the mandate to prevent the exclusion of all American industrialists, oil men or others, from territory which had been won from Turkey with the aid of the United States. True, America was not a member of the League, but, as the Government at Washington pointed out, she had been a "participant in the conflict" and "a contributor to its successful outcome." It could not, therefore, "consider any of the associated Powers, the smallest not less than itself, debarred from the discussion of any of its consequences, or from participation in the rights and privileges secured under the mandates provided for in the treaties of peace."

The British Government answered the American protest by reiterating that its claims to the Mesopotamian oil-fields were based on the concession granted to the Turkish Petroleum Company before the war, and were not, therefore, due to the Allied victory. This contention the American Government refused to accept on the ground that, though the concession to the Turkish Petroleum Company had been granted by the Turkish minister of finance, it had never been ratified by the Turkish Parliament and was, therefore, invalid. The negotiations dragged along for two years, Secretary Hughes adopting the same position as his predecessor,

but an agreement was finally reached at London in November, 1922, whereby the British and French Governments reluctantly consented to modify the San Remo oil pact so as to give American interests 20 per cent of the Mesopotamian output. The diminution of profits involved in thus splitting with the United States would be more than compensated for, however, so the shrewd diplomatists at Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay argued, by obtaining American support for their claims in the Mosul region, which, as was already apparent, were seriously threatened by the Turks. For, in the same month—November, 1922—that the Allies concluded the oil agreement with the United States, Ismet Pasha, the Turkish representative at the Lausanne Conference, demanded that England restore the Mosul region to Turkey. Shortly thereafter, presumably in the hope of enlisting the support of the Washington Government, the Grand National Assembly at Angora formally ratified the Chester Concession.

The demand of the Turks for the restoration of Mosul, originally made in the laconic document known as the National Pact, was based on the argument that only a small minority of the inhabitants of the province are Arabs, and that the majority, consisting of Turks and Kurds, want Turkish instead of Anglo-Arab rule. But the British delegate, Lord Curzon, was adamantine in his refusal to give up Mosul, replying to the Turkish claims by pointing out that the Turks comprised only one twelfth of the total population of the province, the Arabs three twelfths, and the Kurds, another people

which the Turks had long held in rebellious subjection. six and one half twelfths, the remainder consisting of Armenians, Assyrians, and Persians.

If Lord Curzon had stopped there his argument would have been stronger; but he overstepped the bounds of fact when he asserted that the Kurds preferred Arab rule to Turkish. This statement brought sceptical smiles to the lips of those who were acquainted with the facts and who remembered the outburst of wrath that was precipitated when the Kurds learned that the British were scheming to place an Arab prince, Said, a brother of King Feisal, on the throne of Kurdistan.

The truth of the matter is that the Kurds, though they do not love the Turks, infinitely prefer them to the Arabs, with whom they have nothing in common save only their religion, while their affection for England may be gauged by the fact that their hostile attitude has forced the withdrawal of the British garrisons from several Kurdish frontier towns, including Suleimaniyeh. Perhaps the attitude of the Kurd himself is best expressed in a remark made to a correspondent of "The New York Times" by a Kurdish landowner who had journeyed all the way to Lausanne to lay the case of his country-people before the conference. "I no like the Turkish Government," he said. "I no like the British Government. I no like Arab Government. I no like no government. I am farmer."

Both Turks and British recognise the Mosul district as being overwhelmingly Kurdish, the inhabitants of the region being an overflow from Turkish Kurdistan, whose mountains are clearly visible from Mosul on a

clear day, and from Persian Kurdistan, which lies to the eastward. The Kurds, who probably number about two millions in all, are a very ancient people, with a language of their own, their home the mountainous and imperfectly explored region sandwiched between Armenia and Mesopotamia. The great among them correspond to the feudal barons of the Middle Ages, living in mountain strongholds and imposing upon the Armenian agriculturists of the lowlands a species of protection which, costly though it is, is cheaper than raids and massacres; the humbler folk are shepherds or brigands, though, because of their extraordinary strength, they are eagerly sought as *hamals* in the towns along the Turkish littoral. They are warlike, savage, and cruel, and, though clamorous for independence, are wholly unfitted for it, a fact which even the Allied statesmen, eager as they were for the dismemberment of Turkey, were compelled to admit. True, they always gave a certain amount of trouble to the Turkish Government; it is to be doubted if any other nation could as successfully hold them in subjection as the Turks, who have had long years of experience in handling them.

It has been asserted that the real reason underlying Turkey's stubborn insistence on the restoration of the Mosul province is because its oil-fields would provide the Nationalist Government with a desperately needed source of revenue, and there is a considerable measure of truth in this assertion; but I think that, if the facts were known, it would be found that Angora's uncompromising attitude is dictated by political rather than economic reasons. The Turkish Government is deter-

mined to end one of its most troublesome domestic questions by assimilating the Kurds, and this it can never do as long as a portion of Kurdistan remains outside of Turkey's borders. For the British, on the other hand, the difficulty in satisfying the Turkish claim to Mosul is in the fact that, apart from any question of its natural resources, behind the oil-fields of Mosul looms the whole question of Mesopotamia, for the power which holds Mosul will control Baghdad strategically and economically. Should the Turks get Mosul they would unquestionably re-establish their rule over Mesopotamia and probably, sooner or later, over the whole of Arabia. Such a restoration of the former Turkish Empire no British statesman can contemplate with equanimity. It is this potential menace to their wider interests in Western Asia, I imagine, rather than the oil-fields—whose value is, after all, problematical—which has caused the British statesman to adopt so uncompromising an attitude on the Mosul question. If the evacuation of the district (which would mean its seizure by the Turks) is finally determined upon, it would be merely a phase of a general withdrawal from Mesopotamia, a course of action which, in my opinion, the Government will sooner or later adopt in obedience to the demands of the British taxpayer, who, in addition to enjoying the privilege of paying taxes, also possesses the right to vote.

It may be asked whether, aside from the oleaginous and political phases of the question, Mesopotamia is not capable of agricultural development to a degree which would eventually make it an asset for England.

It is very possibly the case that the investment of untold millions in the country might repay itself in the long run, for the desert, so called, is in reality of the richest loam, transformable by irrigation and scientific cultivation into a wonderfully productive region. Its soil is, I should say, fully as fertile as that of New Mexico and Arizona, and, just as those States find an ample water-supply in the Gila and the Colorado, so Mesopotamia could find one in the Tigris and the Euphrates. Experiments have shown that wheat does well in Mesopotamia, which is, indeed, its original habitat; so does rice and long-staple cotton. I was told of the possibilities of wool on Mesopotamian pastures, of fruit-growing areas in the North, and of dates, more than two hundred varieties of which are native to the country, in the Shatt-el-Arab basin, and I proved to my own satisfaction that its melons and cucumbers are unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Many enthusiasts, basing their claims on the reports of the noted British engineer, Sir William Willcocks, who was commissioned by the old Ottoman Government, some years before the war, to make a thorough survey of the country and to estimate the cost of restoring it to the productivity and prosperity which it enjoyed in Babylonian times, have asserted that, with proper irrigation, it could be turned into another Canada or Rhodesia. But, despite this alluring picture, 'Iraq is not a white man's country and never will be. The only reason Britain remains there is because the British public has been systematically deceived as to the real conditions by the imperialists and the oil men. Once the British tax-

payer learns the truth about Mesopotamia, the British occupation will come to an end with startling abruptness, the Arabs, Turks, and Kurds being left to work out their own salvation.

CHAPTER XI

THE DANGER IN THE DESERT

How many people realize, I wonder, that Arabia is larger than all the States lying east of the Mississippi put together. Even those who pride themselves on their geographic knowledge are amazed when they trace on the map the dimensions of this sub-continent, this "Island of the Arabs," as the native geographers call their land. Did you happen to know that were you to start from the northern edge of the Syrian Desert you would have to cover a distance equal to that from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico before you could hear the rollers from the Indian Ocean thundering on the beaches of Oman? Were you aware that the Shiah pilgrim who turns the nose of his camel Meccaward from Baghdad, must ride as far as from the English Channel to the Danube before he sets eyes upon the fantastic outlines of the Kaaba? Though in Arabia the streams of life of three continents meet, though the most important sea-road of the Old World follows its shores for close on three thousand miles, it is so poor a land that international trade has little or no concern with it, and so forbidding that the long circuit by sea is preferred to any short cut by land.

Nevertheless, few regions in the world have played a greater part in the history of mankind, for the Arabs not only were the progenitors of Judaism, largely determined Christianity, and founded Mohammedanism, but during that brief period of marvellous expansion when they set forth to conquer the world for Islam they assimilated to their creed, to their speech, and even to their physical type more aliens than any stock before or since, not excepting the Hellenic, the Roman, the Muscovite, or the Anglo-Saxon.[1]

The Arabian peninsula, which contains upward of a million and a quarter square miles, forms a vast tilted table-land, highest at its western and southern margins, where mountain ranges rise to a height of eight thousand feet and more, and falling northward and eastward by a long and easy decline to the basin of the Euphrates. As most of the moisture from the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean is intercepted by these western and southern steeps—whose narrow seaward slopes are, consequently, well watered and highly productive—the bulk of the peninsula has to depend on such uncertain vapours as may ride down on the air-currents from the Kurdish mountains or may come off the Persian Gulf. Arabia is, therefore, one of the most rainless regions on earth, and further, through its low latitude, one of the hottest. Nor are these all of its physical disadvantages, for it cannot boast a true river in all its immense area, though its surface is broken by numerous *wadis*, which, like the *arroyos* of our own South-West, become raging torrents for a few months each year. It

[1] See "The Penetration of Arabia," by David G. Hogarth.

follows, therefore, that settled life is sporadic over almost all of the peninsula, being maintained only in such isolated spots as collect a little ground-water from wide surrounding areas. In other words, Arabia has no continuously cultivated regions, save in the favoured coastal tracts, but only scattered oases, usually of small extent, which are divided from one another by expanses of sunswept steppe, capable of supporting only the scantiest vegetation, or by deserts of shifting sand on which can exist no living thing.

Arabia, it should be understood, is not a political entity. It is the name applied to the great rectangular peninsula forming the south-western corner of the continent of Asia, which is bounded on the north-west by the mandated territories of Palestine and Syria, on the north-east by the Euphrates, on the east by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, on the south by the Indian Ocean, and on the west by the Red Sea. This vast territory consists, politically speaking, of a fringe of Arab states having more or less firmly established governments and more or less definitely defined boundaries surrounding a barren and inhospitable region of mountain, steppe, and desert, which, though occupied by numerous nomadic tribes, has no political boundaries and no government at all.

The independent Arab states are eight in number. On the north-west, sandwiched between Palestine and the Syrian Desert, lies Transjordania, or, as it is now known, the emirate of Kerak, which corresponds to the biblical land of Gilead. Its ruler is the Emir Abdullah, a son of King Hussein of the Hedjaz, and its capital is

Amman, a town on the Damascus-Medina railway. Stretching southward from Palestine and Kerak runs the long, narrow kingdom of the Hedjaz, with an area considerably greater than that of California. Formerly a territory of the Ottoman Empire, it achieved its independence as a result of the Great War. Its political importance lies in the fact that it contains the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina—the latter being connected by railway with Damascus—which are visited annually by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the Moslem world. Next comes the principate of Asir, where the power is divided between the Idrisi dynasty, who rule the south from their capital at Sabiyah, and the Aidh family, who form the sole authority recognised by the tribes of the highlands. Below Asir lies the imamate of Yemen, whose capital is Sanaa and whose Imam rejoices in the name of Yahya Mohammed Hamid ed-Din. Here perennial waters flow among the hills, so that cultivation is not wholly dependent on artificial irrigation. In western and southern Yemen, therefore, there is found a considerable population wholly settled, and in this part of the peninsula alone Bedouin society is unknown, except as an intrusive element. The great height of the mountains give an Alpine character to the scenery, and the forested ridges and the upland valleys they inclose support towns and villages much larger and more numerous than are found elsewhere in Arabia save only in Oman. Considerable areas are devoted to the raising of live stock and the cultivation of cereals and coffee, the latter, which is the only important item of export, now going out through Hodeida and Aden,

for Mocha, which gave its name to the coffee of Yemen, no longer counts. At the south-eastern extremity of the peninsula is the British protectorate of Aden, which, though little more than a sun-scorched volcanic rock on which only a salamander could feel at home, is of immense strategic importance because it commands the southern entrance to the Red Sea, being one of the watch-dogs which Britain has posted on the sea-road to the East. By the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1914 the hinterland of Aden was prolonged across the entire width of Arabia to a point on the Persian Gulf opposite Bahrein, but as this prolongation crosses the great southern sand-belt known as the Roba el Khali, it is difficult to see wherein its value lies. Bordering the Indian Ocean seaboard is the region known as the Hadramaut, the incense-land, the fabled home of Balkis, Solomon's Sheban queen. Though the Hadramaut is to-day a political No-Man's-Land, so far as any established government is concerned, it possesses an exclusive but highly civilized society, its valleys contain as many and as considerable settlements as the better parts of Yemen, and since the dawn of history it has been famous for its spices. The south-eastern corner of the peninsula is occupied by the sultanate of Oman, first scene of European settlement in Arabia, its capital, Maskat, having been occupied by the Portugese from 1508 to the middle of the seventeenth century. Much of Oman is extremely fertile; fields of cotton and sugar-cane stretch along for miles, and streams of water flow in all directions. Up to the middle of the last century the sultans of Oman also ruled over a long

stretch of the African littoral, together with the islands of Socotra and Zanzibar, but in 1856, owing to a family quarrel, the territory was divided into the two sultanates. The closest relations have existed for years between the Government of India and that of Oman, a British political agent being stationed at Maskat. The sultanate of Koweit is a comparatively small state bordering on that portion of the Persian Gulf known as the Pirate Coast. It acquired considerable importance during the discussion over the Baghdad Railway, the sultan having been induced to place his territory under British protection in order to forestall the Germans in their scheme for utilizing Koweit as the terminus of the Berlin-Persian Gulf system. Hemmed in by this ring of coastal states are two great inland territories, the emirate of Nejd-Hasa and the emirate of Jebel Shammar, the least known and the most interesting countries in Arabia.

Southern Nejd has been visited by only two, possibly three, Europeans, the best account of its mysterious capital, Riahd, being given by the English explorer Palgrave:

Before us stretched a wide open valley, and in the foreground, immediately below the pebbly slope on whose summit we stood, lay the capital, large and square, crowned by high towers and strong walls of defence, a mass of roofs and terraces, where overtopping all frowned the huge but irregular pile of Feysul's royal castle, and hard by it rose the scarce less conspicuous palace, built and inhabited by his eldest son. . . . All around for full three miles over the surrounding plain, but more especially to west and south,

waved a sea of palm-trees above green fields and well-watered gardens. . . . On the opposite side southwards the valley opened out into the great and even more fertile plains of Yemamah, thickly dotted with groves and villages, among which the large town of Manfoohah, hardly inferior in size to Riadh itself, might be clearly distinguished. Farther in the background ranged the blue hills, the ragged Sierra of Yemamah.

Such is the capital of Ibn Sa'ud, the most powerful ruler in Arabia, who, since he expelled the Turks from Hasa in 1913, exercises jurisdiction over all that vast portion of the peninsula lying between the Hedjaz and the Persian Gulf. On the south his dominions—consisting for the most part of barren steppes dotted with numerous oases which support settled populations in spite of the fact that they produce little save dates and live stock—lose themselves in the vast and unexplored desert known as the Roba el Khali; on the north they partially encircle the neighbouring emirate of Jebel Shammar, whose capital is Hail and which is far more Bedouin in character than its great southern rival.

The physical characteristics of Arabia, reacting on its inhabitants, render them in great part—particularly those of the interior—of unsettled predatory habit, intensely individualistic, jealous of the secrets of water and pasture which barely make life possible, and arrogantly proud of a liberty which has never been long infringed. The coastal states, because of their comparative fertility, are able to maintain a settled population, numbering perhaps four millions in all, who support themselves by stockraising, agriculture,

fishing, and trade. But the vast and little known interior of the peninsula, though dotted with oasis-towns which boast buildings four, five, and even six stories in height, is ranged by numerous Bedouin tribes, great and small, whose total number can only be conjectured, which depend for their existence solely on their camels, their horses, and their sheep. (The term "Bedouin," I might explain in passing, does not apply to all the inhabitants of Arabia, as many suppose, but is used by the nomadic tribes to distinguish themselves from the sedentary or "town Arabs" of the coastal districts, and the semi-sedentary Arabs engaged in agriculture, known as *fellaheen.*) The Bedouins, in order to find pasturage and water for their flocks and herds, are compelled to migrate according to the seasons of the year from one region to another, spending the winter months in their homeland in central Arabia, but starting, with the beginning of each spring, on a vast trek, almost a national migration, which takes them as far northward as Kurdistan and Anatolia, where they spend the summer months fattening their animals in the lush valleys, only to turn their faces southward again as winter draws near. Thus it will be seen that the Bedouins are not nomads from choice, as most people suppose, but from sheer necessity. They must move or starve.

From time beyond reckoning the tribes of Arabia have been in a state of perpetual warfare, fighting the Turks, who succeeded for a time in maintaining a shadowy and ineffective suzerainty over a considerable portion of the peninsula, and, in the interims, fighting

each other. For think not that Arabia, because it is backward and remote, is free from political dissensions and dynastic feuds. All the conflicts which have disrupted Europe have had their counterparts in Arabia, with the result that the peninsula has known almost unceasing warfare all down the ages. The unending series of petty wars and forays carried on by the smaller tribes, or by sections of the larger ones actuated either by blood-feuds, by quarrels over pasturage and water, or by a lust for loot, must not be confused, however, with the greater conflicts between the more powerful rulers, which have usually been inspired by political rather than mercenary motives. Not only has Arabia been the scene of many great wars, in which thousands of men have laid down their lives, yet of which only bare rumours have reached the outside world, but certain of these broader conflicts have had their repercussions in the chancelleries of Europe and have markedly affected the policies of certain of the great powers. It is a singular fact that one of these great Arab chieftains, whose name and the name of whose country are almost unknown outside Arabia, has recently succeeded in checking, if not, indeed, in demolishing, one of the most ambitious schemes of empire ever conceived by European statesmen. It is a curious and fascinating story.

By glancing at the map you will see that Arabia forms a mighty barrier separating Britain's possessions in Middle Asia from those colonies, protectorates, spheres of influence, and condominiums which comprise her African empire. Moreover, Arabia menaces, if it

does not control, the two most important sea-roads in the Eastern world: the Red Sea route which is England's highway to India, and the Persian Gulf route which is the only means of access by sea to Mesopotamia and Persia. It will be obvious, then, that if Britain could succeed in bringing the peninsula wholly under her control, the safety of these vital arteries of war and commerce would be permanently secured; she would obtain the long-desired right of way for a trans-Arabian railway which would link the Egyptian and Palestinian systems with those of Mesopotamia and India, and British influence, if not the British flag, would be predominant over the whole of that vast portion of the earth's surface which stretches from the eastern marshes of Burmah to the shores of Table Bay. In fact, if the dreams of the British imperialists are realized, one will be able to travel by an "all red" railway, in a much nearer future than the world dreams of, from Singapore to the Cape of Good Hope. Since the close of the Great War, British imperial policy has been steadily shaping itself toward this end.

But the conquest of such a country as Arabia is by no means a simple matter, even for the British Empire. Its physical characteristics make successful invasion out of the question, and, even if the scattered and highly mobile tribes could be brought under subjection, such a course of action on the part of England would be certain to arouse the resentment, if not the open hostility, of her millions of Moslem subjects in India and Africa, to whom the Arabs are closely bound by the ties of religion. Hence she has sought to win by

diplomacy that which, as she full well knows, could not be gained by force.

When Turkey threw in her lot with the Central Powers, the British imperialists, who had long harboured schemes for the conquest of Arabia, saw their chance. They were quick to realize that, if the Arabs could be induced to revolt against the Turks, the defeat of the latter would be measurably hastened; and, moreover, that, if once the Arabs could be persuaded to enlist themselves on the side of England, it would be tantamount to bringing them permanently under British control. It was recognised very early in the conflict that there was nothing to be done with the Senussi, the fanatical Arab sect which has its centre at Kufra, in Tripolitania, for they were sundered by Egypt from any kingdom which the British might succeed in creating in Arabia. And there was little to be done with the idrisi of Asir or the imam of Yemen, while Ibn Rashid, the powerful and warlike emir of Jebel Shammar, had become an ally of Turkey. There remained within reach of Britain's imperial arm two outstanding Arab figures who could be offered funds and support and the promise of ultimate reward in return for their assistance. These were Hussein, the grand sheriff of Mecca, who, by virtue, of his guardianship of the Holy Places, was one of the most influential personages in the Islamic world: and Ibn Sa'ud, the emir of Nejd-Hasa, who had at his command the largest and best equipped fighting force in Arabia. Now it must be kept in mind that, by thus employing the sheriff of Mecca, the British Government had a double-barrelled motive:

to shatter Turkish prestige by setting up the sheriff as a rival religious leader to the sultan; and, by creating a strong Shereefian state under British protection, to acquire a political foothold in Arabia which would be invaluable for purposes of post-war expansion. A serious complication was caused, however, by the fact that Hussein and Ibn Sa'ud were deadly enemies and cherished ambitions which were diametrically opposed, they and their peoples being divided not only by tribal jealousies of long standing but by the barrier of religious animosity.

For a proper understanding of the situation with which the British found themselves confronted, it is necessary to go back into the history of Arabia for a century and a half. About 1760 a religious zealot and puritanical reformer named Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahab, who had arisen in central Arabia during the first half of the eighteenth century, converted Sa'ud, the ruling emir of Nejd, to his teachings; and at the same time several petty sheikhs who had previously been at war with one another also embraced the new creed, whose followers called themselves Wahabis, after its founder. With these and the new force of inner conviction to sustain them, Sa'ud and his son and successor, Sa'ud ibn Sa'ud, succeeded in creating in the heart of the peninsula a vast Wahabi kingdom.

The Wahabis, who form what is to-day the most powerful single influence in Arabia, and one of the most powerful in all Islam, might be described as the Puritans of the Moslem world, for, founded in the desire to re-establish the teachings of the Koran in their

original austerity and purity, the sect bears much the same relation to Mohammedanism that the Calvinists bore to Christianity. The Wahabis are so stout a bulwark of religious puritanism that they have "proctors" to insure that the tenets of the sect are religiously observed and that such rules as that forbidding smoking and drinking are religiously observed, and to see to it that the mosques remain without ornamentation, for the minarets, coloured tiles, costly rugs, and mural decorations which characterize the mosques in other Moslem lands are anatehema to the Wahabis, who regard any embellishment of their praying-places as the work of Sheitan. So strictly are these rules observed that Wahabis crossing the desert during the fasting month of Ramazan refrain from eating, drinking, and, in some cases, from swallowing their own saliva, between the rising and setting of the sun, and this despite the fact that the Koran specifically exempts from these penances persons engaged on a journey.

The story of the rise, decline, and renaissance of the Wahabi kingdom forms one of the most picturesque and interesting chapters in the history of Arabia. The son of Sa'ud II scourged the holy but iniquitous city of Kerbela, in Mesopotamia, in 1801, and two years later he carried his arms westward, capturing and applying a similar purge to the Holy of Holies for Sunni and Shiah alike, Mecca itself. Medina fell before him the following year, and both Mecca and Medina remained in his possession until 1818, when the sultan's viceroy in Egypt, the famous Mehemet Ali, captured and destroyed Dareiya, the Wahabite capital, and the

Wahabi empire came to a temporary end. But faith lived among the ruins. The Sa'ud dynasty raised its head again in 1830, and a new capital, Riadh, was built near the forlorn site of Dareiya, though a Turko-Egyptian army remained in occupation of the country for another dozen years. The kingdom grew once more, until, about thirty-five years ago, owing to a family quarrel, it came to an abrupt end for a second time, passing into the hands of the Ibn Rashid Family of the Jebel Shammar. But the Ibn Sa'ud family is hard to beat, and in 1901 the present emir of Nejd, then only eighteen years old, slipped into Riadh with fifteen followers under cover of darkness. When dawn broke they murdered Ibn Rashid's governor, and the youthful emir proclaimed himself to the people as the one and only ruler of Wahabiland.

Since then Ibn Sa'ud has recreated to a considerable extent the kingdom of his fathers. In 1913 he drove the Turks out of all the Hasa country, extending his sway northward to the limits of the sheikh of Koweit, eastward to the Persian Gulf, and southward to the borders of Oman. But in the west the grand sheriff of Mecca opposed his pretensions and in 1910 invaded the Nejd, being disastrously defeated, however, and driven back into his own dominions. In October, 1922, the Wahabi chieftain routed a still more formidable rival, Abdullah ibn Mitah, the boy sheikh of Jebel Shammar, and was marching across the state to attack Trans-jordania when halted by the British. And it was only British intervention a year later which prevented Mecca and Medina from falling into his hands.

Ibn Sa'ud has given a great modern impetus to the Wahabi creed by the creation of the religious brotherhood known as the Ikhwan. Over his new dominions, alongside of unregenerate Sunnis and Shiahs, whose public smoking and secret drinking he, unlike his more intolerant and less sagacious forefathers, does not attempt to punish, he has planted colonies of the Ikhwan, who make more converts than were formerly made by the sword and whose missionary activities add to the uneasiness of Mecca. To some extent, also, Ibn Sa'ud interferes with the *Haj,* or Pilgrimage, and thereby lowers the takings that flow into the coffers of King Hussein, for, on the ground that they are idolators, he levies heavy tribute upon the Shiah pilgrims from Mesopotamia and Persia who must, perforce, traverse his territory in order to reach the Holy Places. He has also created a fighting force, superably mounted, well disciplined and armed, which is reputed to number in the neighbourhood of two hundred thousand men.

When the Great War broke out, the British agents in Arabia bent their energies to securing the services of the two enemies, Ibn Sa'ud and Hussein, and pitting them against their mutual enemy, the Turk, whom both hated. Ibn Sa'ud was already well known to the British, for they had had friendly relations with him and with his father before him for upward of half a century. They also knew that he had recently carried out a completely successful campaign against the Turks in Hasa, which territory he had conquered and annexed to his dominions, and that in all probability little encouragement would be required to induce him to

attack Turkey's Arab allies, the people of the Jebel Shammar, who were likewise his hereditary enemies. The British surmise proved perfectly correct, and in January, 1915, Ibn Sa'ud launched his campaign; but fortune proved unkind, for Captain Shakespear, the British officer who was serving as his chief of staff and military adviser, was killed in the battle of Jarrah, and there was also some treachery among the Nejd infantry, so that an engagement which opened victoriously ended in disaster. This misfortune dampened the ardour of the Wahabi leader, and he was out of action for a long time.

Though the grand sheriff of Mecca had long occupied a position of prominence both in Arabian politics and in the Moslem world, the British, curiously enough, knew very little of him at this time. He had the reputation throughout Islam of being a very wealthy man, who derived a large revenue from the annual Pilgrimage, but this reputation by no means endeared him to those outside the circle of his own followers at Mecca, for thousands of pilgrims had returned from the Holy Places all but destitute as a result of his extortionate exactions. But Sir Henry McMahon, then British high commissioner in Egypt, was instructed to lose no time in opening negotiations with him, a series of letters, cunningly phrased to flatter the vanity, arouse the cupidity, and foster the ambitions of the octogenarian ruler of the Hedjaz being written by Mr. Ronald Storrs, the Oriental secretary in Cairo. This encouragement was all that Hussein needed to conceive a grandiose scheme for making himself caliph of Islam

and the head of a new Arab empire which should include all the Arab lands and some which were not Arab at all. And there was no lack of enthusiasts in the Arab Bureau, set up as a war department in Cairo, who urged the British Government to give its active support to virtually all these fantastic claims.

Political intrigue thrives amazingly in the atmosphere of the Orient, and the idea of weakening the prestige of the sultan of Turkey, who was also caliph of Islam, by setting up a new caliphate in Arabia, appealed to them as eminently good business, not only for the purposes of the war but for afterward. What more admirable, they reasoned with great plausibility, than to see an Arab empire, whose sultan should sit in Mecca and be recognised by Islam as Caliph and Lord of the Holy Places, and, at the same time, as the fast friend of Britain, enjoying British favour and protection? The Haj would be organized as it had never been organized before. Millions of loyal Indian Moslems would travel on comfortable British boats to Jiddah, and thence by rapid motor-bus service to Mecca. The results, from an imperial standpoint, would be of incalculable value, and the thunder of "Hadji Wilhelm" would be for ever stolen. To support this conception, the pan-Arabists adduced the most learned historical arguments to show that the sultan of Turkey had no hereditary claim to the caliphate, and that the grand sheriff, in addition to being in actual possession of the Holy Places, had, by virtue of his direct descent from the Prophet, a sounder family claim.

There was one thing, however, which the imperialists

overlooked. This was that the caliphate was no affair of Britain's and concerned only Islam itself. And it is notoriously dangerous, as history has shown over and over again, for a nation to meddle in the religious affairs of another people. As well might the President of the United States have nominated a new pope for the Roman Catholic world as for the British Government to have chosen a new caliph for Islam. Though the more sober and far-seeing statesmen at Downing Street realized this and wisely refrained from any official action, the hot-headed enthusiasts in Cairo did irreparable harm. Shortly the rumour spread like wildfire across Moslem India that England was setting up as a rival caliph to the Turkish sultan the grand sheriff of Mecca, notorious as an extortioner to all who had ever made the pilgrimage. To complicate matters still further, the correspondence carried on between the Arab Bureau in Cairo and the grand sheriff had drifted to greater lengths than the Home Government had ever dreamed of. For example, in order to flatter the vanity of the grand sheriff, someone had thoughtlessly addressed him as "King," though, as Sir Percy Cox is reported to have remarked when he heard of it, "A king implies a kingdom." Nor was the implication lost on the wily Hussein, who immediately thereafter began signing himself in his letters to the Arab Bureau as "King of the Arab Lands," whereupon the British realizing that such an assumption was certain to arouse the hostility of the other Arab chieftains, particularly their other ally, Ibn Sa'ud, compromised in their replies by addressing him as the "King of the Hedjaz."

There now appeared upon the Arabian stage one of the most picturesque and interesting figures produced by the Great War, a young English student and Orientalist named Lawrence, to whom I have referred elsewhere. Possessed of a magnetic personality, plus a remarkable understanding of the Arab character, and provided by the British Government with money in almost unlimited quantities, he quickly won the confidence and fast friendship of King Hussein's handsome and romantic son, the Emir Feisal, becoming his chief of staff and military adviser in the operations against the Turks. The well equipped and highly mobile force organized by Colonel Lawrence and led by Feisal struck the first serious blow against Turkish power in Arabia by cutting the Damascus-Medina railway, thereby isolating the Turkish army operating in the Hedjaz, and shortly thereafter organized a solid advance northward, eventually becoming the extreme right wing of General Allenby beyond the Jordan.

I have related in another chapter how, upon the fall of Damascus, Feisal, encouraged by the British, attempted to set himself up as king of Syria, and how, owing to his refusal to subordinate himself to France, the mandatory power, this attempt ended in ignominy and disaster. I have also told how Feisal eventually became king of 'Iraq, while his brother, Abdullah, was given the princely throne of Transjordania, and another brother, Said, came very near, with the aid of British bayonets, to carving a kingdom for himself in Kurdistan. When Turkey suddenly collapsed in 1918, the schemes of the pan-Arabists appeared to be working

smoothly. According to their plans, the Hashimite family, through its various representatives, was to have the thrones of the Hedjaz, Transjordania, 'Iraq, Kurdistan, and, it was hoped, Syria, and these nations were then to be united or federated into a single Arab empire under British control and protection. Palestine was to be excluded according to the British plan, though probably not according to the plans of the Shereefian clan, because of Lloyd George's promises to the Zionists, whom he could not afford to antagonize.

No more stupendous scheme of empire has ever been devised; and, had it succeeded, it would have brought under the Union Jack all of the western half of the continent of Asia. British influence would have been supreme from the borders of China to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the area of Britain's eastern empire would have been more than doubled. That it did not succeed was due primarily to the bitter and long-standing rivalry between the Hashimite dynasty, as represented by Hussein and his sons, and the Wahabi power as represented by Ibn Sa'ud. This feud, as might have been foreseen, made an Arab federation out of the question; though French hostility to the scheme, as expressed in the expulsion of Feisal from Syria, the amazing renaissance of Turkey, and the deep distrust of British designs which exists throughout the Islamic world, were all contributory factors.

Hussein, once he deemed his position secure, did not prove the willing tool that the British had expected. Obsessed by his dream of creating a realm which would

embrace the whole of Arabia, and doubtless counting on greater support than the British were prepared to give him, the grand sheriff and his son Abdullah attacked Ibn Sa'ud immediately after the Armistice, in direct contravention of the pledge they had given Britain. But the Wahabis thrice defeated the Hedjazis ignominiously, and in May, 1919, Mecca lay at their mercy and they had only to march into it, which they refrained from doing, however, in deference to British wishes. The British intervention only served to encourage the Hedjazis, and they continued to commit various acts of aggression against the Nejd, until, in 1921, Ibn Sa'ud sent word to Sir Percy Cox, the British high commissioner at Baghdad, that, unless the British could keep their unruly protégés in order, he would be compelled to retaliate. The placing of Hussein's son, Feisal, on the throne of 'Iraq, drained the Wahabis' patience to the dregs, Ibn Sa'ud declaring that he could not quietly permit himself to be thus encircled by his avowed enemies. The British, well aware that Ibn Sa'ud was the stronger and could destroy the Hédjazian forces whenever he chose, hastened to placate the Wahabi leader by addressing him as "King of Nejd" and offering him a subsidy of sixty thousand pounds a year, "paid monthly in arrears," if he would remain quiet.

But the British have not yet devised any means of keeping quiet King Hussein, who has ignored every effort to make him live at peace with his neighbours, and who has now increased the complexities of the situation by threatening the Zionists in Palestine. In

the autumn of 1922, Hussein, losing his sense of proportion altogether, virtually broke with his British benefactors by issuing a declaration that, as the Treaty of Sèvres had been rendered nugatory by the Kemalist victories in Anatolia, the Arabs need no longer feel themselves bound by any compacts made under it. Sitting among the ruins of his dreams of an Arab empire, of which he was to be the head, Hussein is no doubt a bitterly disappointed and resentful man, but that does not lessen the significance of the attitude which he has now adopted, its significance being increased, if anything, when it is recalled that the Hedjaz is not held under a mandate but is independent, though its independence would be worth nothing if England were not behind it. The truth of the matter is that King Hussein will remain on his throne only so long as Ibn Sa'ud receives sixty thousand pounds of British money every year. If those payments should cease, as many British statesmen urge that they shall, the independence of the Hedjaz would vanish overnight. The only explanation of Hussein's virtual defiance of the British, with all that it implies, is that, as is persistently rumoured in Oriental circles, he has lost his mind.

The British backed Hussein, as I have said before, with a dual end in view: to split Islam and to unite the Arabs. But Islam has not been split, for the caliph nominated by the Grand National Assembly at Angora has been accepted by virtually the whole of Islam. And the Arabs, instead of being united in a confederation under British influence, are, as a result of the

troubles stirred up by Hussein, farther apart than they were before. It is conceivable, however, that, should the British withdraw from Mesopotamia, as they are seriously considering doing, and cease paying a subsidy to Ibn Sa'ud, that ruler, with his horde of fanatical Wahabis, might come near to achieving something approaching Arab unification by smashing Hussein, Feisal, and Abdullah and annexing their dominions to his own, as many authorities believe that he would be able to do. As it is, he has difficulty in keeping his restless tribesmen from raiding the three Hashimite kingdoms. But, even if he did succeed in bringing about by the sword an approximation of an Arab confederation, he would almost inevitably sooner or later run up against the Turks, just as his predecessors did in the days of Mehemet Ali, and perhaps with the same result unless there was outside intervention in his favour.

In an earlier chapter I have called the reader's attention to the surprising change in the attitude of the Arabs toward the Turkish Nationalists, as indicated by the great rejoicing with which the news of Mustapha Kemal's victories was received throughout the Arab lands. Now, this has a deeper significance than is indicated on its face by reason of the fact that Mustapha Kemal is known to favour the creation of an Arab confederation, to include all the Arab territories of the old Ottoman Empire, his plan being that such an Arab government should work with Angora in all matters of military, financial, and foreign policy under a system

somewhat similar to that which obtained in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Though I am convinced that Kemal has no thought of weakening the new Turkey which he has created by bringing within its boundaries any non-Turkish territories, this would indicate that he does contemplate the erection of a political and economic union—something more than an alliance—between the Turks and the Arabs. When the deep-seated antagonism which has so long existed between the two races is taken into consideration, such a union would be a strange thing, and its mere suggestion would have been ridiculed a few years ago. But stranger things have happened. For the Arabs feel that they have not been justly dealt with by the Allies, who, it must be admitted, have not hesitated to break their war-time pledges to them. Hussein is bitter against both the British and the French; so is Abdullah; so is Feisal. Ibn Sa'ud accepts a British subsidy, but he has neither love nor loyalty for those who pay him. The Arabs of Palestine and Transjordania distrust the British Government for its support of Zionism. The Arabs of Syria detest the French. The Arabs of Mesopotamia, their taxes increased and their freedom curtailed under the British mandate, grow more restless daily. Thus it would seem as though the gulf which so long separated the two races had been bridged by Arab hatred of Britain and France. If this is so, and I have about come to the conclusion that it is, then a Turko-Arab accord has come within the realm of political possibilities. And such an accord would spell

finis to European ambitions in western Asia. Make no mistake about that.

By this I do not mean to imply that I think an Arab Empire is on the cards, for I do not. I do not believe that the Arabs, with their tribal jealousies and intense individualism, are capable of forming large communities to which governmental systems could be applied satisfactorily. In fact, those who are really familiar with Arab characteristics have always doubted whether the ambitious programme of emancipation, political development, and eventual unification outlined by the pan-Arab enthusiasts was practicable at all. For the Arabs are, when all is said and done, a race, a congeries of nomad tribes with bodies of townsmen here and there; not a nation "rightly struggling to be free." That they could ever sink their jealousies and differences to a point which would permit the establishment of anything approaching an empire, in the usually accepted sense of that term, I greatly doubt, but I do believe that, under certain conditions, they might, urged by self-preservation and a common hatred of the unbeliever, form some sort of a loose confederation. Should Ibn Sa'ud, who is admittedly the most powerful prince in Arabia, succeed in disposing of his Hashimite rivals, which he could very probably do if he saw fit, such a confederation might be brought into existence under his leadership, particularly as it would have behind it the very powerful Wahabi organization, whose strength is steadily increasing.

It may be said that such a confederation would not, after all, seriously concern the outside world, which

has few vital interests in Arabia. But let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that a confederation, composed of all the Arab lands between the Mediterrranean and Persia, were to join hands, in some sort of an alliance, with the new Turkey. That, as will quickly be realized, would be quite a different matter. And those who really know the peninsula and its people deem it by no means beyond the bounds of possibility, I assure you. In our ignorance of the facts we underestimated the strength and determination of the Turks. Let us not make the same mistake about the Arabs. Think not that there is no danger in the desert.

CHAPTER XII

PERSIA AWAKES

It was a British statesman—Lord Salisbury, if I am not mistaken—who once remarked that, in order to understand the Persian question, one should consult a large-scale map. For the country of the shahs is so isolated, so remote from the world's main routes of trade and travel, so far beyond the political horizon of the West, that we have failed to grasp the immensity of it. Close on a thousand miles from the borders of Turkestan to the shores of the Arabian Sea, and nearly the same distance from the Afghan mountain wall to the Mesopotamian marches, the empire would, if set down in the United States, cover virtually the whole of that vast region lying between the Great Lakes and the Gulf, between the Mississippi, and the Rockies.

Iran, as the country is known to its own people, consists, in the main, of the western part of the great table-land which separates the Mesopotamian lowlands from the plains of northern India. This plateau, which is extremely difficult of access on its western face, has an elevation of from two thousand to six thousand feet, being broken, particularly in the north-west, by moun-

tain ranges which rise much higher, Mount Demavend, near Tehran, rearing itself more than nineteen thousand feet into the Persian blue, while an altitude of seventeen thousand feet is attained by Mount Ararat, the traditional resting-place of the ark. In the south, however, the plateau gradually declines to the low-lying lands which border the Persian Gulf, while in the north the transition from the high, bleak steppes to the malarious, tiger-haunted jungles which fringe the Caspian is so abrupt as to be startling. A large part of the interior of the country is salt desert, the site of a prehistoric sea, which, by separating the centres of population, adds materially to the difficulties of government and of communication. This physical fact explains why throughout Persia's history, save during the régimes of strong rulers, the local governors have succeeded in arrogating to themselves a large measure of authority, with the result that the central power has been correspondingly weakened.[1]

Persia is heavily handicapped economically in that she possesses few rivers of any size, the Karun, which debouches into the Persian Gulf, alone being navigable. This lack of water is the most serious economic problem with which the Persians have to contend, for, though the soil is generally fertile, save in the salt deserts just mentioned, cultivation is, perforce, restricted to the river valleys and to districts irrigated by artificial means. Things were not always thus, however, for, judging by the remains of ancient works, a very different state of affairs must have existed in earlier times.

[1] See "Recent Happenings in Persia," by the Hon. J. M. Balfour.

With the introduction of modern irrigation methods, such as we have employed in the reclamation of the South-west, there seems no reason why a very much greater area could not be brought under cultivation and a very much larger population supported upon the land; for the engineering difficulties, so experts assure me, are by no means insuperable. But any extensive reclamation project must be dependent on the establishment of an adequate system of communications, the only railways which the empire at present possesses being an extension of the Caucasian system to Tabriz, and an insignificant narrow-gauge line, six miles in length, from the capital to a local shrine. Persia remains, therefore, the only country of any size in the world which is virtually destitute of railways.

Until quite recently the mineral resources of Persia —barring petroleum—were regarded as insignificant, but investigations which have been undertaken during the past few years have materially altered this opinion, prospectors having discovered deposits of iron, coal, lead, copper, manganese, nickel, borax, and cobalt in hitherto unsuspected quantities. In the vicinity of Lake Urumiah, in north-western Persia, for example, very extensive coal and iron deposits have been discovered close together, the latter, it is reported, assaying as high as 70 per cent. But, even if Persia possessed no other resources, she would be rich from her petroleum alone, her oilfields covering an enormous area. Outside of the Hamadan region, which has only a secondary importance, the oil deposits form two main zones, one in the north and the other in the south-west of the

empire. The northern zone, which is a continuation of the naphtha region around Baku, in the Caucasus, taverses the five northern provinces—Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan, Astrabad, and Khorassan. Here centres the widely discussed controversy between American and British oil companies, of which I shall have more to say later in this chapter. The south-western oil fields, which are in the Bakhtiari country, near the head of the Persian Gulf, being a continuation of the celebrated deposits near Mosul, in Mesopotamia, are being worked with great profit by a British concern, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, but, for reasons which I shall explain later on, the northern fields have thus far remained unexploited.

As no attempt has ever been made to take a census —partly because a great number of the people are nomadic and partly because of the opposition which would be aroused among the peasantry, who would regard any such proceeding as a prelude to increased taxation—it is impossible to do more than hazard a conjecture as to the population of Persia. Though, during the half-century which began in 1830, the population is believed to have diminished by at least a third as the result of pestilence and famine, it is still undoubtedly greatly in excess of the estimate of eight millions made by the "Statesman's Year Book." Striking an average between the lowest figures given by foreigners and those of conservative Persians gives us a population of about fifteen millions, which, I imagine, is somewhere near the truth.

As a result of its geographical situation, Persia, since

the very dawn of history, has been the breakwater of the West, upon which the successive waves of nomadic emigration, rolling westward out of Asia, have dashed themselves all down the centuries. As a result of the human flotsam and jetsam which these waves left in their wake, her population to-day is composed of many and various elements. The original inhabitants were Iranians, or Aryans—that is, the parent-stock from which we of the West sprang—but upon these have been superimposed Mongols, Tartars, and Semites, not to mention numerous other races which have contributed in a lesser degree to form the present ethnological mosaic. Perhaps no better classification of the peoples of Persia exists than that given a century ago by an English traveller, Sir John Malcolm, who described the Persians as falling into four main groups: the Turkoman tribes, dwelling mainly in the north and north-east; the Kurds and Lurs,[1] whose chief habitat is in the mountains along the Mesopotamian border; the Arabs on the shores of the Persian Gulf; and the settled urban and agricultural populations, which are mainly Aryan.

Nothing is more unwise than to generalize about a people, particularly a people composed of so many widely different elements as the Persian, yet they possess certain traits which are characteristic and should not be overlooked in estimating the future of the country. Though the Persians have by no means escaped the shortcomings of other Orientals—the lower classes are, as a whole, illiterate, superstitious, dilatory, sometimes

[1] As a matter of fact, the Kurds and Lurs are Aryan and speak the ancient tongue of Iran.

lacking in courage, and not always characterized by a strict regard for the truth—they have many admirable qualities which go far to redeem these defects. Singularly happy in disposition, witty, nimble-minded, fond of poetry and philosophical discussions, they are agreeable and entertaining companions. Indeed, one would have to go far to find a more charming gentleman than a Persian of the upper classes, particularly one who has been educated abroad. They are, moreover, whether prince or peasant, kindly, patient, tactful, sympathetic, highly intelligent, and intensely patriotic. Perhaps their most characteristic trait is their unfailing politeness, the standard of courtesy obtaining in all classes being far above that of the West. Though the nobles and those of the upper classes are, for the most part, small boned and somewhat below medium stature, the peasantry are of fine physique, while, particularly in the northern provinces, one frequently encounters veritable giants. Though they show the effects of centuries of poverty and oppression, there must be a rugged and courageous strain in a people who, hemmed in by predatory and aggressive nations, repeatedly overrun by barbaric hordes, have for close on three thousand years preserved their national integrity and independence.

Perhaps the greatest bar to Persia's progress lies in the almost entire absence of that middle class which forms the backbone of most Western countries. Of such as there is the merchants constitute the best element. The Hon. J. M. Balfour, one of the best informed of modern observers, has said of them "that

their word is as good as their bond, and that a verbal understanding in most cases will be scrupulously supplemented." Though the merchant class has hitherto been comparatively small, it is steadily increasing, the new generation being fully alive to the importance of industry, commerce, and business in general. The merchants are limited in number, however, so that, apart from the upper class—the nobles, the wealthy landowners, and certain of the clergy—there are but few Persians who possess sufficient education to undertake the direction of affairs. It augurs well for the country's future, however, that a growing number of young men of the humbler classes are studying and paying their way abroad, fitting themselves for public service in the home-land. It is a significant fact that the present minister of war, Riża Khan, who is generally regarded as the strong man of Persia, is of the humblest origin, having started his picturesque career as a private in the ranks of the Cossack Brigade.

Persia's social problem is to be found in the great gulf which divides the population. On one side, entrenched behind their traditional privileges like feudal barons, are the aristocracy, selfish, arrogant, and avaricious; on the other are the peasantry, who, at the mercy of their landlords and the local officials, in many parts of the country occupy a position not far removed from serfdom, though it should be added that they usually have a share of the produce and profits and sometimes themselves own the land. With such a social system, wholly dependent upon beast-borne transportation, with large areas terrorized by brigands and robber

barons, with the peasantry exploited by the feudal overlords, and with the political power in the hands of a few score men, Persia has been, and in a measure still is, in the Middle Ages, a condition from which she is, however, rapidly emerging.

An overwhelming majority of the Persians are Moslems of the Shiah sect, who differ to some extent in religious doctrine, and more in historical belief, from the orthodox Moslems of Turkey, Arabia, India, and Africa, who are called Sunni. The main difference between the Shiahs and the Sunnis is that the former regard the first three caliphs or successors of Mohammed—Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othman—as usurpers, asserting that the real successor of the Prophet was his nephew and son-in-law, Ali, around whose family, therefore, centres the Shiah faith. The Shiahs are generally regarded by foreigners as being more fanatical and intolerant than the Sunnis, though this charge they vehemently deny, asserting that it is the Sunnis who are intolerant and fanatical. The fact remains that no unbeliever is permitted under any circumstances to set foot in the Shiah mosques or shrines. The Persian priesthood, which is very powerful, is under the control of the *mujtahids*, of whom there are many in Persia, whose influence is very great, the rulers of Persia though there are only four or five whose decisions are accepted as final. With these leading *mujtahids*, have always had to reckon, for, unlike the Turkish sultans, the Shiahs have no religious standing. As the Shiahs do not recognise the caliphate, it follows that they do not acknowledge the claim of the Turkish

sultan to the spiritual leadership of Islam, so that the influence of the caliph, predominant throughout other Moslem lands, does not extend across the Persian frontier. It should be noted, in this connection, that Nedjif and Kerbela, the two great shrines of the Shiah world, are both in Mesopotamia, which may be one of the reasons, perhaps, why Great Britain is reluctant to evacuate that country.

Until early in the present century the shah was, in theory at least, an absolute monarch, an autocrat whose word was law provided he had the power and the courage to back it up. In practice, however, the actual power lay not so much in the hands of the sovereign as in those of a small clique of courtiers and politicians, who sold the power delegated to them to the highest bidder, this system prevailing from the top all the way down, from the prime minister to the *khodas* of obscure villages. As each purchaser was perfectly aware that he might be dismissed at any moment because his post had been sold to some one else, he devoted all his energies to making as much money as possible while he had the chance, and to do this he did not hesitate to employ methods of oppression and extortion. It goes without saying, therefore, that education, communications, public improvements, and the other functions of a progressive modern government were wholly neglected, the officials, from highest to lowest, regarding the public service as a means of livelihood for themselves and nothing more. Though the old absolutism of the shah is gone, and though the pernicious system which so long prevailed of obtaining public

offices by bribery, and of recovering the bribes by extortion, is steadily, if slowly, disappearing, Persia must suffer from its ill effects for many years to come. When national development and individual initiative have been systematically discouraged for centuries they cannot be expected to blossom forth overnight.

During the opening years of the present century popular resentment at the Government's subserviency to Russia, the extravagance of the shah, and the profligacy of his court had been steadily growing, and in 1906 this resentment made itself felt in a demand for a constitutional form of government, whereupon the reigning shah, Muzaffer-ed-Din, a weak, benevolent monarch, granted the country a constitution. Whether this document, compiled largely from French and Belgian sources, was suited to the requirements of the Persians is open to some question. Indeed, it was for a time a question whether the Persians themselves were fitted for constitutional government, as was shown when the Madjless, or Parliament, was first convened; for the deputies indulged in the most trivial discussions, spectators insisted on joining in the debates, and on the floor of the chamber pandemonium reigned, with the result that the business of administration was seriously interfered with. But as the novelty of the new form of government wore off, such incidents became rarer and rarer, the Madjless being to-day as orderly as most other legislative bodies in Western lands. Though my Persian friends, some of them at any rate, maintain that the Madjless really represents the Persian people and has their confidence, foreign observers quite

generally agree that the Madjless has at no time been a representative assembly in the Western sense of the term, for there has been no attempt to hold regular elections, and at the elections which have been held only a small proportion of the people have cast their votes, no sitting has been held at which much more than a quorum was present, and there have been but six meetings in seventeen years, at all of which the decisions of the deputies were influenced by the mob, and one of which was suppressed by the army. The Persian answer to this is that the irregularity of the elections and the infrequency of the sittings have been due to pressure and interference by foreign powers, which have found it easier to squeeze concessions from the shah and his ministers when the Madjless was not in session. The fact is that it would be about as near the truth to describe the Government of the United States as a dictatorship as to assert that Persia is governed in a constitutional manner. A Tehran paper summed it all up not long ago when it remarked that the vast majority of the people were still uncertain as to whether the constitution was something to eat or something to wear.

Though the members of the Madjless have, on the whole, served their country faithfully and as efficiently as their parliamentary inexperience would permit, the influence of the Madjless has been, until very recently, offset by the systematic weakening of the Central Government as the result of foreign intrigue and intervention. For the fact must never be lost sight of that since the days of Peter the Great Muscovite policy has

regarded Persia as lying within the Russian sphere of influence, and as destined ultimately to be absorbed by the Russian Empire, as were the Central Asian khanates. Up to the fall of the czar's Government in 1917, this policy was followed undeviatingly by Russian statesmen. After having swallowed up Persia's rich Caucasian provinces and the Turkoman lands beyond the Caspian, The Bear proceeded to stretch his great bulk along the whole northern frontier of the shah's dominions.

Now the Russian bear, land-hungry, treacherous, and warlike, was anything but a pleasant neighbour for the Persians, or for the British beyond, on whose Indian Empire the great beast had fixed his cunning, greedy eyes. It was obvious that Great Britain could not view with equanimity the continued southward advance of the Bear, and that she could not permit it to continue without great danger to herself; so, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, Persia became a battle-ground, or, to put it more accurately, a chess-board, on which the two great rivals played a desperate and unscrupulous game, with the political control of Persia, and all that that implied, for the stake. Persia thus found herself being ground between two millstones, for every Russian aggression on the north was promptly followed by a British counter-move on the south, which explains why fear of and opposition to both Russia and Great Britain have been, throughout the last half-century, the motives underlying Persian statecraft. This also explains, in large measure, the policy of intrigue pursued by the

Persian leaders—for they had no other weapon. It is not surprising, therefore, that, during the Great War, the sympathies of Persia were to a great extent with Germany, not because of any particular affection for the Germans, but because a German victory would, through weakening Russia and England, avert the peril to Persia of absorption by those powers.

Before the present century was five years old Russia had a strangle-hold on all northern Persia. The Cossack Brigade, composed of Persians and the only effective unit of the shah's army, was commanded by Russian officers, with a Russian non-commissioned personnel, so that it received its orders from St. Petersburg rather than Tehran. The roads of North Persia, which had been built by Russian capital and engineers and were under Russian control, were in reality military highways, designed with a view to facilitating a Russian invasion. The Russian bank in Tehran had secured a strong grip upon Persian resources by means of mortgages and upon many influential Persian politicians by bribes masquerading as loans. By a secret customs agreement, concluded a few years before, Russian trade had been favoured at the expense of the British; and lastly—most potent argument of all—the gleam of Russian bayonets could always be seen along the northern frontier.

By 1907 the relations between Britain and Russia had become so strained that war was only averted by the conclusion, in that year, of the Anglo-Russian Convention—as selfish and cynical a document as was ever engrossed on parchment. This was designed to

eliminate further friction and misunderstandings by clearly defining the spheres of influence of the two powers, neither of which, however, thought it necessary to consult the Persians themselves, who had no voice in the matter, though they were the parties most vitally concerned. Stated briefly, the convention recognised that Ispahan and all that part of Persia to the north lay within the Russian "sphere of enterprise," while the Gulf littoral and the whole of the province of Kerman, which adjoins Baluchistan, was assigned to the British. The intervening territory was declared to be neutral, and in that narrow strip, and there alone, the Persians might do as they pleased. Without a shadow of moral justification for the proceeding, the two great empires, acting on the maxim that "might makes right," divided Persia between themselves as unconcernedly as the partners in a burglary would divide the loot.

That the publication of the terms of the convention should raise a storm of indignation and protest throughout Persia was not, of course, surprising, since it was very naturally regarded as a preliminary to actual annexation. Nor was this conviction in any way weakened by the assurances of the signatories that they had no designs on Persian independence, for it was recalled that England had been in Egypt for a quarter of a century despite similar promises to the Egyptians, and that the Russian flag flew over the whole of Turkestan. From that moment Britain lost the popularity and confidence which she had formerly held in Persia, being regarded by the Persians, and with good

reason, as Russia's accomplice in her burglarious designs.

Russia lost no time in making her power felt in Persia. In 1908, as a result of the bombardment of the Madjless by the Cossacks and its dissolution by the pro-Russian shah, Muhammad Ali, who took his orders from the Russian legation, a revolution broke out between the reactionaries, who sided with the sovereign and the Nationalists, who sided with the Madjless. The Russians, as might have been expected, gave their support to the royalists, preferring to see Persia weakened by a corrupt and autocratic government rather than strengthened by an honest and representative one. The struggle centred around Tabriz, the chief stronghold of the Nationalists, which was besieged by the royalists. Seeing that the besiegers were making no progress, Russia thereupon took an active hand in the game, by herself occuping Tabriz. At the same time another Russian column advanced toward Tehran from the north while the Bakhtiari chieftains moved on the capital from the south. For some days there was intermittent fighting in the streets of Tehran between the revolutionaries and the Cossack Brigade, which had remained loyal to the shah, but hostilities were finally terminated by Muhammad Ali, who, realizing that further resistance was useless, sought refuge in the Russian legation. The present shah, Sultan Ahmad, then a child of eleven, was thereupon declared his father's successor on the Peacock Throne, the fallen monarch leaving Persia under Rus-

sian protection and with a generous pension to console him.

By this time the more far-seeing of the Persian leaders had recognised that the future prosperity of the country, if not its very existence as an independent nation, was dependent upon prompt and drastic financial reform. In 1911, therefore, a serious attempt to reorganize the finances of the empire was begun by an American, Mr. W. Morgan Shuster, who, upon the recommendation of the Department of State, had been engaged by the Persian Government as financial adviser with the title of Treasurer-General of Persia. Mr. Shuster was quick to realize that his only hope of success lay in his obtaining from the Madjless virtually dictatorial powers so far as the administration of the finances was concerned, for in Persia nominal authority is of little value unless there is force behind it; so one of his first steps was to organize a Treasury Gendarmerie under European officers for the collection of taxes, which were greatly in arrears, and for the enforcement of other financial regulations. That the plan of reorganization adopted by Mr. Shuster was a sound one not even his bitterest critics deny, but, unfortunately for him and for the success of his mission, he soon found himself opposed by Russia and to a lesser extent by Britain, neither of which had the slightest desire to see Persia put upon her feet financially or otherwise strengthened. The first break came between the treasurer-general and the Russian minister as the result of the former's insistence on the appointment as chief of the Treasury Gendarmerie of a British officer, Major Stokes, to which

the St. Petersburg Government objected on the ground that a British officer could not be permitted to exercise authority—even Persian authority—in the Russian sphere. The first quarrel led to others, and toward the end of the year Russia presented the shah's Government with an ultimatum demanding Shuster's immediate dismissal, a demand which Persia was powerless to refuse. Thus ended the first attempt to reform Persian finances with American assistance.

When the Shuster controversy was at its height, Russia, using as a pretext the anarchical conditions which prevailed along the Caucasian border, marched a force into Persia, reoccupied Tabriz, hanged several Nationalist leaders, including members of the clergy, and demanded and obtained the dissolution of the Madjless. Whereupon the British Government, as a counter-move to the Russian invasion, despatched a regiment of Indian *sowars* to occupy Shiraz. Despite the Anglo-Russian Convention, neither nation trusted the other, and so they sat, like two gamblers, each with his hand on his gun.

From then until the outbreak of the Great War Persia was independent only in name, for Russia had established a virtual protectorate over the whole northern portion of the empire, and in the south British influence was supreme. Both Russian and British forces were maintained on Persian soil, and it was from the Russian and British legations, rather than from the Madjless and the Palace of the Ark, that the country was really run. When the war broke out, therefore, the hatred of the Persians for Britain was scarcely less

bitter than their hatred for Russia, this state of the public mind producing, as a natural corollary, a predisposition in favour of Germany, for most Persians were firmly convinced that the only chance Persia had of regaining her independence lay in the defeat of her powerful and predatory neighbours.

Throughout the war Persian neutrality was violated by England, Russia, and Turkey over and over again, her northern and western provinces being used as a battle-ground by the opposing forces. Quite early in the war a Russian army crossed north-western Persia in order to invade Turkey, using Persian territory as a base for their operations against the Turks. Just when connection had been established between this Russian force and the British army in Mesopotamia, the campaign was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the Russian revolution, which, by the elimination of Russia as a power to be reckoned with, materially altered the complexion of affairs. Though the British conquest of Mesopotamia had the effect of increasing British prestige in Persia, it did not serve to allay Persian suspicion of British designs, for the Persians now saw themselves hemmed in on two sides by British territory and with British sea-power supreme upon a third, while Russia, which could have been counted upon to hold British ambitions in check, was now out of the game altogether, at least for the time being.

Nor was the behaviour of the British during the remainder of the war calculated to increase their popularity with the Persians. On the contrary, they seemed more bent on antagonizing Persian sentiment

than on placating it, for, on the plea that Persia was too weak to enforce her proclaimed neutrality, they proceeded to flout it themselves. In a vain attempt to stiffen Russian resistance to the Turkish advance in the Caucasus, a small expedition under General Dunsterville, known as the "Dunsterforce," was marched across north-western Persia to the Caspian: a contingent of Anglo-Indian troops was pushed up through eastern Persia to Meshed in order to check Bolshevist movements toward Afghanistan and the frontiers of India; while in the south Sir Percy Sykes occupied Shiraz, took over the gendarmerie force which had been organized by the Swedes, and reorganized it under British officers as the South Persia Rifles, all this being done in defiance of Persian disapproval. For upward of four years, therefore, a little war, or rather, a whole series of little wars, was being waged in a theatre half the world away from the scene of the mighty parent conflict in Europe. In addition to this armed violation of Persia's neutrality, the British Government had recourse to an extensive system of subsidies and bribes, with the purpose of purchasing the neutrality of the Persian chieftains just as it had that of the Arab sheikhs. Though this wholesale subornation may have been excusable in war-time, there was certainly no justification for continuing it after the war was over, it being the continuance of this policy after peace had come that was largely responsible for the suspicion and distrust with which the British are to-day regarded in Persia.

When the Anglo-Russian Convention was concluded

in 1907, those who were then shaping the foreign policy of Great Britain believed in a general rapproachement with Russia, feeling that it was the part of wisdom to divide the Persian loot rather than risk a conflict with the Bear. But at the conclusion of hostilities the situation had completely changed. Russia, formerly supreme in North Persia, lay prostrate under the heel of Bolshevism, and the Muscovite statesmen who had planned the dismemberment of Persia were either in exile or in their graves. Britain, on the other hand, in addition to having immensely increased her prestige throughout the Middle East as a result of the Allied victory, had become the active protector and financier of Persia; for not only was Persia at this time virtually under British protection but, apart from local and personal subsidies, Britain was furnishing her monthly with four hundred and fifty thousand tomans—equivalent, at the rate of exchange then prevailing, to about a million dollars—to meet the running expenses of the Government.

Now the imperialist faction which was then in power in Downing Street, headed by Lord Curzon and Mr. Winston Churchill, held that it was absolutely essential to the interests of the British Empire that Great Britain should seize the opportunity afforded by the collapse of Russia to acquire a dominating position in North Persia, thereby succeeding czarist Russia and forestalling Soviet Russia, which was known to harbour ambitions in that region but was not yet strong enough to put them into execution. The temporary impotence of the Colossus of the North obviously offered a golden

opportunity to the British statesmen, and one which they were not slow in seizing. Acting on the assumption that the Anglo-Russian Convention had expired with the collapse of the czarist Government which negotiated it, the British Foreign Office instructed its envoy at Tehran, Sir Percy Cox, to set about the negotiation of an instrument which would give Great Britain the dominant position in Persia that she desired. By the terms of the convention, which was officially known as the Anglo-Persian Agreement, England, while undertaking to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Persia, was to obtain financial and military control of the country by reorganizing its finances and its army; to effect a similar reorganization of the civil administration; to revise the existing customs tariff, which had been negotiated in the interests of Russia; to develop a system of communications, particularly railways; and to arrange for a loan which would permit the carrying out of these reforms. In short, Persia was to become a British protectorate, in fact, if not in name, with the same measure of independence, and no more, that Britain usually permits to those "backward" nations whose guidance she consents to assume.

Judged by the standards of international diplomacy, the agreement was not, on its face, open to criticism. But the method employed to obtain the assent of the Persian cabinet to the agreement was open to very grave criticism indeed. The facts, briefly put, are these. According to the Hon. J. M. Balfour, who, by virtue of his position as chief assistant to the British

financial adviser, must have been conversant with what took place, the negotiations looking to an Anglo-Persian understanding were carried on with three members of the Persian cabinet: Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, at that time the strong man of Persia; Prince Akbar Mirza, an aristocrat of most charming manners who some years before had murdered his mother; and Prince Firouz Mirza, the two last named being nephews of a former shah, Muzaffer-ed-Din. The proposals of this precious trio having been received favourably by Sir Percy Cox, negotiations were continued with the greatest secrecy, as the minister of foreign affairs was known to disapprove of the whole proceeding. In order to prevent his interference, he was ordered to proceed forthwith to Europe to represent Persia at the peace conference, it being alleged that his trip, taken at so opportune a time, was engineered by the British Foreign Office.

"The Agreement was in some quarters regarded as a corrupt bargain," says Mr. Balfour in "Recent Happenings in Persia," "and unfortunately it is almost impossible to disprove this assertion. . . . At the last moment the Persian trio stipulated, as a precedent condition of signing the Agreement, that a sum equivalent at the then rate of exchange to £131,000 should be turned over to them. This was agreed to, and the payment was made very shortly after the signature of the Agreement. It is utterly impossible to explain away this payment upon any straightforward view of the transaction. Firstly, it was diametrically opposed to the intention of the Agree-

ment that all advances thereunder should be expended under the advice and control of the Financial Adviser; and secondly, the method of payment was so peculiar, and the ultimate destination of the money so veiled in secrecy, as to justify the most sinister inferences regarding the transaction. The money was paid direct to the three Ministers, with, I believe, the express proviso that no inquiry should be made as to its expenditure. . . . It need hardly be added that the one thing which is certain is that the money never reached the Treasury."

Though the necessary official signatures had thus been bought and paid for, the bargain was not yet complete, for, according to the Persian constitution, the agreement was not binding and operative until it had been confirmed by a vote of the Madjless. But the Madjless was not in session; hence, if the agreement was to become operative, new elections must be held and deputies elected who could be depended upon to vote for ratification. The elections which followed, judging from all accounts, compared very favourably with the best efforts of Tammany in the days of Tweed and Croker, being characterized by every form of fraud, intimidation, and corruption, in which, according to popular report, the British legation had a hand, and it was this belief which led to the extreme anti-British attitude adopted by the new Madjless. For by this time the details of the unsavoury transaction had become public property, and so violent was the storm of indignation thus aroused that the newly elected deputies, despite the manner of their election, did not dare

further to irritate public sentiment by voting for ratification, though from Lord Curzon in London came peremptory messages demanding that it be effected without further delay. Meanwhile a number of British advisers, financial and military, had arrived in Persia to take over their duties under the terms of the agreement. But in June, 1920, the instigator of the agreement, Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, and his cabinet fell, being succeeded by Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who immediately suspended the newly arrived advisers pending action by the Madjless. But Governments do not last long in Persia, and five months later that of Mushir-ed-Dowleh was succeeded by one headed by Siphidar Azam, who, however, followed the policy of his predecessor, refusing to consider the agreement as operative until ratified by the Madjless and declining to utilize the services of the British advisers and their assistants until such action had been taken. But public dissatisfaction with these weak and dilatory tactics was steadily growing, and on February 21, 1921, it suddenly manifested itself in a *coup d'état*, effected by the Persian Cossacks, who occupied the capital and elevated to the premiership a brilliant, forceful, and patriotic young publicist, Seyyid Zia-ed-Din, one of whose first acts was to denounce the obnoxious agreement.

In spite of all the difficulties and perplexities with which it was confronted, it is probable that the Government of Zia-ed-Din might have succeeded in establishing itself firmly, and inaugurating the reforms for which it stood, had it not been for the serious dissensions between the civil and military elements, or, to be

more exact, between Zia-ed-Din and Riza Khan, the Sardar Sipah, or commander-in-chief of the army. The first crisis was overcome by the premier's agreeing to let Riza Khan become minister of war, in addition to continuing as commander-in-chief, but another acute situation arose a few days later, when Riza Khan demanded that the gendarmerie—after the Cossacks the most efficient force in Persia—should be transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of War. This demand was also, though reluctantly, granted, the Sardar Sipah thus gaining control of both forces, so that from that time until the present he has been the virtual dictator of Persia. Riza Khan's position was strengthened by the fact that Zia-ed-Din, who was known to be pro-British, had still further irritated public opinion by his wholesale imprisonment of former ministers. As the minister of war, a resolute and ruthless man, had behind him not only the army but the anti-British sentiment of the country, the premier quickly realized that his position was hopeless, and toward the end of May, 1921, he fled, with several of his colleagues, to Mesopotamia. He was succeeded by Ghavam-es-Salteneh, the governor of Khorassan and a brother of the Vossugh-ed-Dowleh who had played so questionable a rôle in the negotiations leading up to the signature of the Anglo-Persian Agreement (though in character and policy the two brothers have nothing in common), but his tenure of office lasted only eight months, the premiership passing, in January, 1922, to Mushir-ed-Dowleh, a moderate and cautious politician

of great wealth, who, it will be remembered, had been prime minister for a brief period two years before. But, though cabinets come and cabinets go, the burly Riza Khan stays on, the real power in Persia.

This brief outline of Persia's frenzied political history during the past few years would hardly be complete without at least passing mention of one more characteristic episode, the oil controversy. The story—I will make it as brief as possible—is as follows. Back in 1901 an Englishman, W. K. d'Arcy, had obtained a grant for the working of the oil-fields in South Persia, which grant he transferred to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, a controlling interest in which is held by the British Government. Now, in the days before the Anglo-Russian Convention, a concession to a national of one of the two rival powers had usually resulted in a compensating concession to a national of the other. The concession given to British interests in the south had, therefore, though at a later date, been counterbalanced by one covering three of the northern provinces—Gilan, Astrabad, and Mazanderan,—which in 1916, was given to a Russian subject named Khoshtaria, who was a native of Georgia, in the Caucasus. But in their legality these two concessions varied greatly, for, whereas the British grant was made in 1901, before the introduction of the constitution, the Kheshtaria concession was granted after the promulgation of the constitution, and, in accordance with the law, had to be ratified by the Madjless before it could become valid. As it has never received such ratification

it is, under the laws of Persia, invalid. It should be added that it was granted under pressure from the Russian legation, the secretary of which was associated with Khoshtaria in the transaction. About 1920, however, Khoshtaria, who had been ruined by the Russian Revolution, succeeded in selling his "concession" to a concern known as the North Persia Oils, Limited, a subsidiary of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, for a sum reported to be in the neighbourhood of $1,400,000. The purchasers were perfectly aware, of course, that Khoshtaria could not give a clear title and that they were really buying a pig in a poke; but Persia was at that time completely under British domination, British armies were on Persian soil, and it looked as though the country was destined to become a British protectorate, which meant, so the Anglo-Persian Company figured, that their interests would be protected, no matter how the concession was acquired, particularly as 51 per cent of the stock was owned by the British Government.

But, as I have already shown, the British schemes for acquiring political control of Persia ended in disaster. The Anglo-Persian Agreement was denounced by the Tehran Government, British troops were withdrawn from Persia, and British prestige dropped almost to the vanishing-point. Accordingly, as soon as Persia was relieved of British troops and British pressure and the Madjless reconvened, the first important act of that body was unanimously to emphasize the illegality and invalidity of the Khoshtaria "concession," and to authorize the Government to offer the oil rights in the

five northern provinces to an American corporation, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.

Thereupon the British, who believed that they had acquired an absolute monopoly of the oil resources of Persia, which are of inestimable value, became seriously alarmed. The British legation at Tehran lodged a strong protest with the Persian Government against the action taken by the Madjless, while the British embassy in Washington sent a similar protest to the Standard Oil Company and to the Department of State. To these protests the Persian Government replied by reiterating that the grant to Khoshtaria was irregular and illegal, as, under the constitution, no concession to a foreigner was valid until approved by the Madjless. In 1922 the Madjless, aroused by a rumour that the Standard Oil Company was planning to placate its British rivals by sharing the concession with them, directed the Government to open negotiations with American companies, other than the Standard Oil, which would undertake to develop the fields with American capital alone. For the Persian Government, having freed itself of the British incubus, has not the slightest intention of permitting its return.

A significant side-light on the British attitude toward American commercial expansion in those regions which Britain considers as within her own sphere of enterprise is found in the Hon. J. M. Balfour's "Recent Happenings in Persia." In speaking of the oil controversy he says:

It cannot be questioned that in pursuit of concessions the Americans have been pursuing an anti-British policy in Persia and Mesopotamia, and now that they have obtained what they aimed at, and that the Standard Oil Company has spread its tentacles into yet another country, it may be hoped that this line of action will cease. Even if this is not the case, the result should be beneficial, for in future the American interests in North Persia will serve as a useful buffer between the real British sphere in the south and the Russian pressure and intrigue from the north and upon American interests will fall the first brunt of Russian aggression when next the bear resumes his move towards the south. In view of the selfish policy which the United States pursued during the late war, and their evident intention of making the most of the peace at the expense of those who fought, there is a certain satisfaction in the possibility of their embroiling themselves in future complications.

The picture of political life in Persia which I have sketched in the preceding pages is anything but a bright one, as I am well aware; and if the conditions which have heretofore obtained in Persian public life gave promise of continuing indefinitely, the friends of Persia might well despair. But a remarkable change has come over the country in the last three or four years, a change for the better that is daily becoming more apparent. The national conscience seems to have awakened at last. Princes, politicians, and peasânts alike are acquiring a sense of responsibility which has heretofore been unknown. Political corruption is steadily, if slowly, disappearing. The demand for modern educational facilities, particularly along

technical lines, has become so insistent that it can no longer be ignored. Every year sees a larger number of young Persians going abroad to obtain Western educations, while others, their studies completed, are constantly returning to the home-land, bringing with them new ideas, new ideals, and a new-born mental vigour. There is evident among all classes a genuine desire to see Persia shake off the leeches of lethargy, incompetence, and corruption, which have clung to her for centuries, and to take the place to which her brilliant history entitles her among enlightened and progressive nations.

The brightest augury for better days that Persia has seen in many years occurred in the autumn of 1922, when, at the request of the Persian Government, a group of American financial and technical advisers, headed by Dr. A. C. Millspaugh, former economic adviser of the Department of State, was sent to Tehran. These men, who were carefully selected for their experience and ability, are now serving in executive capacities in the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Millspaugh having been given the title of administrator-general of finances, with all the authority that the title implies.

For nearly a year now the finances of the Persian Government have been under the control of the American administrators. This applies not only to broad fiscal policies, which are worked out under Mr. Millspaugh's direction, but also to the actual receipt and disbursement of public funds, which are supervised by his representatives. The divorce of the imperial finances from any political control has already borne

fruit in a steady improvement of the nation's financial situation, this improvement having been so marked that, in the opinion of the American advisers, the Persian Government is now in a position to contract one or more foreign loans, preferably in the United States, the proceeds being destined in large part for reproductive enterprises to be carried out by American firms.

The last report of the administrator-general shows that the economic condition of Persia is far better than the world has been led to suppose. It might be mentioned, parenthetically, that the popular misconceptions regarding Persia's financial and economic status are largely due to the British, who, as part of the scheme for gaining control of the country, carefully fostered the idea that it was on the verge of bankruptcy. As a matter of fact, the debt of Persia—both gross and per capita—as compared with almost any other country, is virtually negligible. This is accounted for partly by the almost utter lack of development of Persia's natural resources, partly by freedom from disastrous wars, and in part by the lack of familiar credit facilities in that country. The result is a national burden phenomenally small as compared with the potential, and even the present, wealth of the nation.

There is, and there has been, no inflation in Persian currency, the Government deserving great credit for refusing to take the paper money pathway to apparent prosperity and certain ruin. In fact, no government paper of any kind is used as currency, for it would be extremely difficult to induce the masses of the people to

accept anything but "hard money" in their ordinary transactions. Such bank-notes as there are have always been redeemable in the silver unit of the country, the toman, which has never dropped more than a few points below par, and which, during the period of the war, nearly doubled in value.

With the exception of the southern oil-fields—one of the most productive petroleum areas in the world—the vast natural resources of the empire have been scarcely touched. Under the general direction of American advisers who are shortly to be appointed for the Ministry of Public Works, it is expected that American capital will find highly profitable employment in the exploitation of the great oil-fields of the northern provinces and the country's numerous and virgin ore deposits, in the construction of roads, railways, and bridges, in the development of an extensive irrigation system, and other means of building up Persian industry and commerce. The loans needed for carrying out these projects will be guaranteed by the assignment of certain public revenues for the service of the debt or negotiated in connection with specific construction contracts for improvements likely to produce an income ample to care automatically for the loan. As an additional reassurance for foreign investors, the Persian Government has agreed that the expenditure of the proceeds from the loans shall be entirely controlled by the American officials, who, on behalf of the Government, will come to a full understanding with the lending groups, who will thus have a guarantee that the money will not be squandered.

Though at the moment of writing (October, 1923) the American advisers have been in Persia less than a year, it is not a great exaggeration to assert that they have brought about more numerous and far-reaching reforms in that brief period than the empire has known in all the three thousand years of its existence. A budget system has been introduced, and—a novel experience for Persia!—receipts give promise of equalling or even exceeding expenditures. In order to improve the balance of trade, which is at present against Persia, steps have been taken to decrease the imports by prohibiting the importation of luxuries, as it is felt that certain articles do not develop the industrial life of the country or add to its well-being. The Bank of Iran has been reorganized and placed under the direction of an American, Dr. Bogart, who, recognising that agriculture is the mainstay of the country, has inaugurated a system for extending financial aid to the farmers as done by farm loan banks in the United States. Arrangements have been made for the vaccination of cattle in certain districts with a view to educating the proprietors and peasants in the use of the anthrax serum, it having been found that anthrax carries off from 25 to 40 per cent of the cattle in a district in a single bad season. Attention has been devoted to the destruction of sen and grasshoppers, which have in recent years caused much damage to the crops. Steps have been taken to check the prevalence of malaria among the peasants, this disease alone incapacitating a large percentage of the agricultural workers in the province of Tehran. Recommendations have been made for the

establishment of bakery services in the principal towns of the Tehran district, this measure being necessary for the welfare of the inhabitants, who have heretofore been at the mercy of those whose interest it is to control and monopolize the supply of bread and its components. A new set of regulations governing the cultivation, distribution, and sale of opium have been drawn up in conformity with the policy of gradually eliminating the drug as adopted by the League of Nations. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that there is scarcely a single field of Persian endeavour where American advice is not now being beneficially felt.

In addition to the economic reforms which I have outlined, which promise to effect an amazing and early transformation in the country's affairs, there are other factors working in Persia's favour. The empire is in a state of domestic peace. Her provinces are loyal to the Central Government. Her roads were never more safe for commerce. The tranquility of the country is assured by a strong, well disciplined, and regularly paid gendarmerie, which is now entirely free from foreign intrigue. This force acts as a national police and effectively supports the work of the financial administrators, particularly in such matters as the collection of taxes and the enforcement of customs regulations.

Not in many years has Persia enjoyed so large a measure of political independence and national security as she does to-day. The Government of the Romanoffs, aggressive, predaceous, unscrupulous, for centuries a standing menace to Persian liberty, has vanished, never

to return. Nor is the influence of Bolshevist Russia likely to make itself felt in Iran, for the doctrines of Lenin and his followers make no appeal to the masses of the Persian people, who are economically, religiously, and temperamentally unfitted for communist propaganda, which would also encounter bitter opposition from the Moslem priesthood, which is a power to be reckoned with in Persia. And the threat from the south has disappeared as completely as the menace on the north, for Britain, fully preoccupied by troubles elsewhere, has withdrawn all her forces from the shah's dominions and has definitely abandoned her attempt to acquire political control of the country.

Persia is now entering upon a period of political development and economic expansion which, in view of her remarkable geographic situation and her enormous natural resources, promises to make her, in a much nearer future than might be supposed, one of the most progressive and prosperous of Oriental nations. In her development she earnestly desires American participation, for, coupled with her appreciation of America's financial strength, is a faith, universal among Persians, in America's political disinterestedness and economic efficiency. It is a rare thing, in these days of selfish and cynical international relations, for one nation to place such implicit confidence in the unselfishness and good faith of another. For that reason, if for no other, I should like to see America lend Persia a helping hand. But there is another and more compelling reason. For a strong, progressive, and prosperous Persia, forming

a buffer between British India, Soviet Russia, and Nationalist Turkey could do much toward ending the struggle for power which has so long disrupted Moslem Asia and so frequently threatened the peace of the world.

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